

Emergency department activity and waiting times weekly update

Publication metadata (including revisions details)

Publication date: 09 May 2023

Metadata indicator and description

Publication title

Weekly Update of Emergency Department Activity and Waiting Times.

Description

This publication reports key statistics on attendances at Emergency Departments (ED) across Scotland. The information presented in the publication includes trends in the number of attendances and length of time patients spend in ED.

Theme

Health and social care

Topic

Emergency Care

Format

Webpage, Excel workbook and CSV

Data source(s)

NHS Board aggregate submissions to PHS on Emergency Department Activity and Waiting Times.

Date that data are acquired

Tuesday of the week prior to publication

Release date

Every Tuesday

Frequency

Weekly

Timeframe of data and timeliness

New data for the week ending 9 days before publication (e.g. 16 April publication contains data for week ending 7 April)

Continuity of data

1. A&E discharge times at hospitals in NHS Lothian were not accurately recorded up to November 2017. The Academy of Medical Royal Colleges was commissioned by Scottish Government to ascertain the causes for the data issues in NHS Lothian. The review **findings** were published 26 June 2018
2. Since 3 March 2015, the Scottish Government (SG) has released Official Statistics weekly A&E activity and waiting times information for the EDs in Scotland, derived from aggregate information supplied by NHS Boards on the number of attendances and 4, 8, and 12 hour waits. PHS (formally ISD) took over this data collection for statistics covering the week ending 7 June 2015.
3. From 20 May 2018, Raigmore hospital in NHS Highland trialled a new patient flow system. As a consequence, the accuracy of some patients' waits may have been affected between this date and 4 July, however the total number of attendances remains correct.
4. Changes to the way people access A&E were implemented on 3 December 2020 help people get the right care in the right place. For more information see: <https://www.gov.scot/policies/healthcare-standards/unscheduled-care/>

This new approach will keep people and NHS Scotland safe by ensuring A&E provides the fastest and most appropriate care for people when they really need it.

While people should continue to call 999 or go directly to A&E in emergencies, those with non-life threatening conditions who would usually visit A&E should call NHS 24 on 111 - day or night. People can also continue to call their GP practice for urgent care or access help online from **NHSinform.scot**

NHS 24 assess people by telephone and can refer them to the right care by the right healthcare professional and as close to home as possible. If A&E is the most appropriate service to provide that care, NHS 24 will make a referral to A&E where a telephone or video consultation may be offered by A&E staff. This will help keep people safe and avoid unnecessary travel to hospital. If a

face-to-face consultation is necessary, the nearest A&E may arrange an appointment to avoid waiting in crowded areas wherever possible.

This means that the data presented in the weekly and monthly publications will change over time. PHS will include information on planned attendances as a separate analysis. These planned attendances will not be included in the 4 hour standard statistics

Revisions Statement

These figures are official statistics intended to provide timely information from aggregate weekly returns and it is envisaged that revisions will not be made.

Data subject to a higher level of quality assurance is released monthly and a comparison of the two sources is available on the [PHS website](#).

Revisions relevant to this publication

29/01/2023, NHS Ayrshire & Arran, University Hospital Crosshouse, attendance from 1043 to 1042, over 4 hours from 373 to 372, over 8 hours from 146 to 145, over 12 hours from 77 to 76.

09/04/2023, NHS Highland, Caithness General Hospital, attendance from 185 to 186, over 4 hours from 36 to 37.

16/04/2023, NHS Highland, Caithness General Hospital, attendance from 208 to 210, over 4 hours from 30 to 31.

23/04/2023, NHS Highland, Caithness General Hospital, attendance from 202 to 205, over 4 hours from 45 to 48, over 8 hours from 14 to 15, over 12 hours from 2 to 3.

Concepts and definitions

Relevance and key uses of the statistics

Waiting times are important to patients and are a measure of how the NHS is responding to demands for services. Measuring and regular reporting of waiting times highlights where there are delays in the system and enables monitoring of the effectiveness of NHS performance throughout the country. The NHS in Scotland has been set a number of targets for maximum waiting times.

Accuracy

These aggregate statistics are subject to only basic quality assurance checks. NHS Boards are required to confirm to PHS that the statistics are accurate.

Completeness

The statistics in this release cover only EDs (larger A&E services that typically provide a 24 hour consultant led service). Full information on the use of other sites that provide A&E services such as minor injury units, small hospitals and health centres in rural areas is not currently included.

Complete information is reported through PHS's monthly report on Accident and Emergency Activity and Waiting Times.

<https://beta.isdscotland.org/find-publications-and-data/health-services/hospital-care/ae-activity-and-waiting-times/>

The percentage of A&E activity in NHS Scotland taking place within Emergency Departments: Financial Year 2021/22 is shown in the table 1 below.

Table 1 Percentage of A&E activity in NHS Scotland taking place within Emergency Departments:Financial Year 2021/22

NHS Board	Percentage ED Activity
NHS Ayrshire & Arran	96%
NHS Borders	99%
NHS Dumfries & Galloway	100%
NHS Fife	79%
NHS Forth Valley	73%
NHS Grampian	87%
NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde	85%

NHS Board	Percentage ED Activity
NHS Highland	67%
NHS Lanarkshire	100%
NHS Lothian	86%
NHS Orkney	100%
NHS Shetland	100%
NHS Tayside	87%
NHS Western Isles	73%
NHS Scotland	87%

Comparability

National Statistics on A&E Activity and Waiting Times are published on the first Tuesday of every month. These statistics are derived from the A&E datamart to which NHS Boards submit data as either episode level files containing a detailed record for each attendance or as aggregate files containing monthly summary attendance and compliance figures only.

Please note that since the publication on Tuesday 6 October 2020 the data for this publication also comes from the A&E datamart.

All 4 UK countries publish information on the time spent in Accident and Emergency (A&E), though this can be labeled under Emergency Department (as in Scotland) or Emergency Care (as in Northern Ireland). The published statistics are not exactly comparable because: they were designed to monitor targets which have developed separately within each country; the provision and classification of unscheduled care services varies across the UK; the systems which collect the data are different.

England <http://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/ae-waiting-times-and-activity/>

Northern Ireland <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/topics/dhssps-statistics-and-research/emergency-care-statistics>

Wales <http://wales.gov.uk/statistics-and-research/time-spent-nhs-accident-emergency-departments/?lang=en>

Accessibility

It is the policy of PHS to make its web sites and products accessible according to [published guidelines](#).

Coherence and Clarity

Value type and unity of measurement

Count of total attendances. Count of attendances in department for 4, 8 and 12 hours. Proportion of attendances in department for 4 hours.

Disclosure

The [PHS protocol on Statistical Disclosure Protocol](#) is followed.

Official Statistics designation

Non National Statistics

UK Statistics designation

Not Accessed.

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03 March 2015

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04 May 2023

Early Access details (Including Pre-Release Access)

Pre-Release Access

Under terms of the “Pre-Release Access to Official Statistics (Scotland) Order 2008”, PHS are obliged to publish information on those receiving Pre-Release Access (“Pre-Release Access” refers to statistics in their final form prior to publication). The standard maximum Pre-Release Access is five working days. Shown below are details of those receiving standard Pre-Release Access.

Standard Pre-Release Access

Scottish Government Health Department

NHS Board Chief Executives

NHS Board Communication leads