Delayed discharges in NHSScotland monthly

Figures for November 2023

A National Statistics publication for Scotland

Published	09 January 2024
Type	Statistical report
Author	Public Health Scotland
Topics	Delayed discharges

Contents

About this release

Timely discharge from hospital is an important indicator of quality. It is a marker that care is person-centred, effective, integrated and harm-free.

A delayed discharge occurs when a hospital patient who is clinically ready for discharge from inpatient hospital care continues to occupy a hospital bed beyond the date they are ready for discharge.

Our monthly update

This release provides a monthly update on the:

- number of people experiencing a delay in discharge from hospital at the monthly census point – the last Thursday of the month
- number of hospital bed days associated with delayed discharges in the calendar month
- number of discharges from hospital that followed a period of delay in the calendar month

The data relate to people aged 18 years and over who were clinically ready for discharge.

A selection of information from this publication is included in NHS Performs (external website).

Next release

The next release of this publication will be 6 February 2024.

Main points

Number of people delayed

At the November 2023 census, there were 1,910 people delayed. This is an increase in the number of people delayed in the past three months, with a 5% increase in number of people delayed from October 2023 (1,815). A similar trend was observed in November 2022.
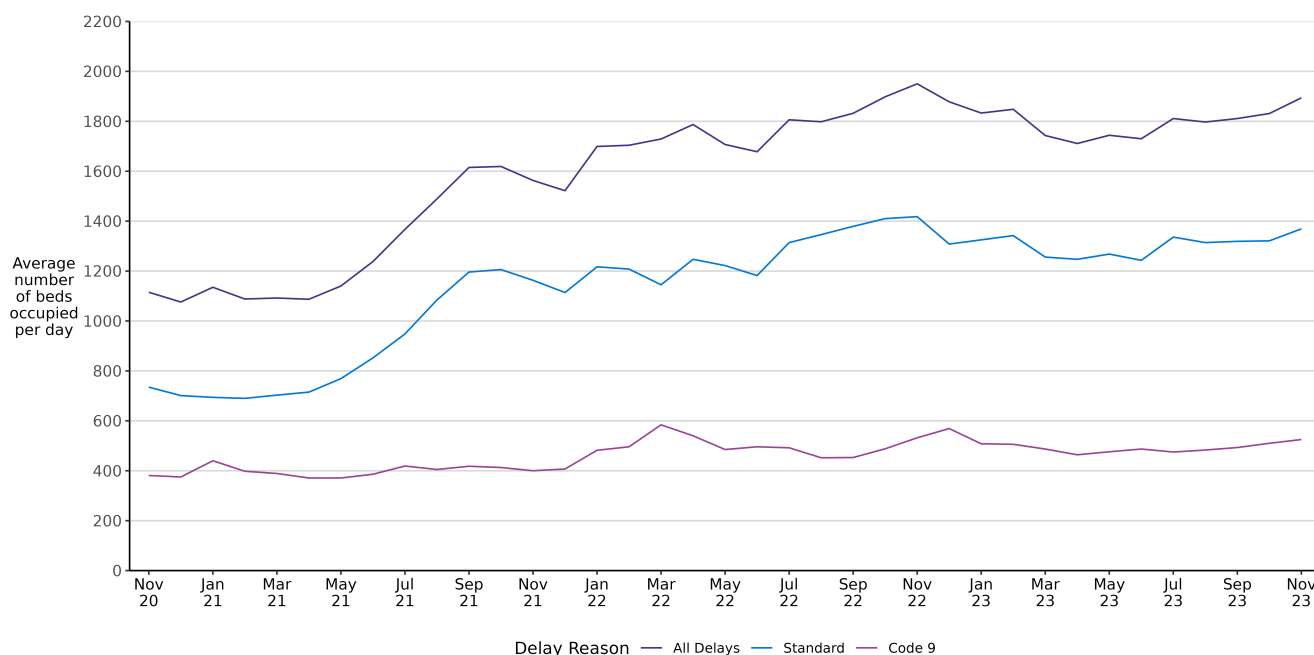
The number of people delayed varies across the Local Authorities. Chart 4 in All delay reasons workbook shows the variation in the rate of delays per population at November 2023 census.

Length of delay at census point

The average (median) length of delay for people delayed at the November 2023 census was 22 days. This is a reduction of 5 days from the October 2023 figure and a reduction of 6 days from the September 2023 and August 2023 figures.

Average number of beds occupied per day

Delayed Discharge bed use in Scotland from November 2020 to November 2023, by delay reason[1]

[1] Further information on the Delay Reason definitions is available in the Definitions we use section of this publication.

In November 2023 the average number of beds occupied per day due to people delayed in hospital was 1,894. This is an increase in the average number of beds occupied per day in the past three months, with a 3% increase from the October 2023 census (1,831). A similar trend was observed in November 2022.

The chart above shows that the trend in the average daily number of beds occupied by people delayed in their discharge is predominantly driven by the trend in standard delays (health and social care and patient, family and carer related) reasons.

Delayed days in hospital

In November 2023 there were 56,811 days spent in hospital by people whose discharge was delayed. This is a 3% decrease from the number of delayed days in November 2022 (58,501).

Downloads

The tables show information grouped by delay reasons (see Definitions we use section for more information) and report information on the following:

- Census figures
  - Information on the number of people experiencing a delay in their discharge at the - monthly census point. Information provided includes: reason for delay, location of delay and delay length.
  - The census figures include delays due to infection control measures in place at hospital or care home (delay reason codes 26X and 46X).
- Bed days occupied
  - The number of bed days associated with delayed discharges within a calendar month.
- Discharges following delay
  - Discharge from hospital following delay, discharges from hospital to home or placement following a period of delay within a calendar month.

Download the files associated with this month's report or access the open data.

All delay reasons

This workbook contains summary statistics for delayed discharges for all delay reason groupings.

📄 Summary tables XLSX | 4.5MB

Standard delay reasons

This workbook contains statistics for delays in discharge due to standard reasons (health & social care reasons and patient & family related reasons).

📄 Standard delays tables XLSX | 5.8MB

Complex delay reasons

This workbook contains statistics for delays in discharge due to code 9 (complex) reasons - Adults with Incapacity (AWI) and other code 9 reasons (non-AWI).

📄 Code 9 delays data tables XLSX | 2.7MB

Open data

🗄 Delayed discharges open data

Contacts

General enquiries

If you have an enquiry relating to this publication, please contact Simon Quirk at phs.delayeddischarges@phs.scot.

Media enquiries

If you have a media enquiry relating to this publication, please contact the Communications and Engagement team.

Requesting other formats and reporting issues

If you require publications or documents in other formats, please email phs.otherformats@phs.scot.

To report any issues with a publication, please email phs.generalpublications@phs.scot.

Further information

How we calculate our figures

The average number of beds occupied per day is calculated by dividing the total monthly number of delayed discharge bed days by the number of days in the calendar month.

We consider this daily average a better statistic for comparing month-on-month differences as the number of days in a month varies.

The percentage change is based on rounded figures.

Effects of COVID-19 on figures

The measures put in place to respond to COVID-19 have affected the delayed discharge figures in NHSScotland.

The marked fall in delayed discharges during 2020 is likely to be due to patients being moved out of hospital to increase capacity.

Definitions we use

Delay reasons

Since April 2016, following the integration of health and social care partnerships, delays are reported in three main categories.

Health and social care reasons	Where a person remains inappropriately in hospital after treatment is complete and is awaiting appropriate arrangements to be made by the health and social care partnership for safe discharge.
Patient, family and carer related reasons	This includes delays due to legal reasons and disagreements.
Code 9 complex reasons	It is acknowledged that some discharge arrangements may be more complex due to the specific care needs of the person. Complex delays have been captured as code 9 from 2006.

Delays due to health and social care reasons and patient, family and carer-related reasons can be aggregated into a single standard delay reasons category.

Code 9 complex reasons can be split into:

- code 9 - Adults with incapacity (AWI) reasons
- code 9 - other reasons

The latest data definitions and national data requirements came into effect on 1 July 2016. The Data and Intelligence site provides details on data definitions and reporting.

The figures in this publication are not directly comparable with other UK countries. This is due to differences in definitions and data reporting.

Statistical designation

This is a National Statistics publication.

National Statistics status means that the official statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and public value. They are identified by the quality mark shown on this page.

The UK Statistics Authority has designated these statistics as National Statistics. This signifies compliance with the Code of Practice for Statistics.

Once statistics have been designated as National Statistics, it is a statutory requirement that the Code of Practice shall continue to be observed.

The statistics last underwent a full assessment by the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR) against the Code of Practice in September 2011. The OSR is the regulatory arm of the UK Statistics Authority and their website provides access to the full assessment of the statistics.

Visit the UK Statistics Authority UK website to find out more about the Code of Practice.

Find out more about National Statistics on the UK Statistics Authority website.

Early access

More information about delayed discharges

Find out more information about delayed discharges, including data definitions and reporting.

Metadata

Publication title	Delayed discharges in NHSScotland
Description	This publication provides monthly information on the number of hospital bed days associated with delayed discharges and the number of discharges from hospital following a period of delay for a full calendar month. Information is also provided on the number of people experiencing a delay in discharge from hospital at the monthly census point.
	Figures are shown for Scotland, NHS board area of treatment and local authority of residence for people aged 18 and over who were clinically ready for discharge.
Theme	Health and Social Care
Topic	Delayed discharges
Format	HTML and Excel
Data source(s)	Public Health Scotland (PHS) delayed discharge monthly data submission.
Date that data are acquired	The number of people delayed as at a monthly census snapshot taken on the last Thursday of the month.
	The number of bed days occupied by people delayed in their discharge from hospital in the calendar month.
	The number of discharges from hospital following a period of delay in the calendar month.
	These data were submitted by NHS boards to Public Health Scotland in December 2023.
Release date	9 January 2023
Frequency	Monthly
Timeframe of data and timeliness	Data are available for publication within six to eight weeks of the census month.
Continuity of data	NHS boards submit delayed discharge information to PHS for national reporting purposes.
	Revised data definitions manual and national data requirements were

effective 1 July 2016. For detailed changes to the definitions since 2005, see page 2 of the latest Delayed Discharge Definitions Manual effective 1 July 2016 and a summary of changes and impact on national reporting.

Some NHS boards used the EDISON system to record people delayed in their discharge from hospital. During 2018 EDISON was retired and affected boards migrated to their own local system solutions. NHS boards are still required to report on delayed discharges as specified in the data definitions and national reporting requirements effective 1 July 2016, therefore figures remain comparable and we do not expect any reduction in the quality of the data.

Revisions statement	Figures contained within each publication may also be subject to change in future publications. Further detail can be found on the about our statistics section of the website.
Revisions relevant to this publication	This publication has no revisions.
Concepts and definitions	View the delayed discharge data definitions manual (effective from 1 July 2016), national data requirements (effective 1 July 2016) and a summary of PHS validation checks.
Relevance and key uses of the statistics	Key uses of delayed discharge information include monitoring policy obligations both locally and nationally, helping to troubleshoot in partnership areas with specific problems, facilitating benchmarking with other areas, identifying the potential release of resources to focus on more appropriate care and providing useful dialogue between health and social care agencies.
	Delayed discharge information is also used to respond to information requests (including Freedom of Information (FOI) requests) from a variety of customers and parliamentary questions.
Accuracy	The data are considered accurate. Data are validated locally by partnerships. PHS carry out further validation checks in consultation with NHS boards.
Completeness	100% of the data is used for analysis.
Comparability	Data are not comparable out with Scotland.
Accessibility	It is the policy of Public Health Scotland (PHS) to make its web sites and products accessible according to published guidelines.
Coherence and clarity	All delayed discharge reports are available on this website. Tables and charts are presented within interactive Excel workbooks with drop down boxes.
Value type and unit of measurement	Number of delays by length and reason at the census point. Number of bed days occupied by delayed patients in a calendar month. Number of discharges from hospital following a period of delay in a calendar month.
Disclosure	The PHS protocol on statistical disclosure is followed.
Official Statistics designation	National Statistics
UK Statistics Authority Assessment	The statistics last underwent a full full assessment by the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR) against the Code of Practice in September 2011.
Last published	5 December 2023
Next published	6 February 2024

Next published	Historic quarterly data published from December 2000
Date of first publication	Historic quarterly data published from December 2000 Monthly data published from June 2015 First annual publication in June 2016
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