

Delayed discharges in NHSScotland monthly

Figures for January 2024

Accredited official statistics



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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 2 April 2024.

Main points

Number of people delayed

At the January 2024 census, there were 1,860 people delayed. This is a 3% increase in the number of people delayed compared to December 2023 (1,813). The number of people delayed in January 2024 was lower than the November 2023 figure (1,910) but greater than the October 2023 census (1,815).

The number of people delayed varies across the Local Authorities. Chart 4 in the All delay reasons workbook shows the variation in the rate of delays per population at the January 2024 census

Length of delay at census point

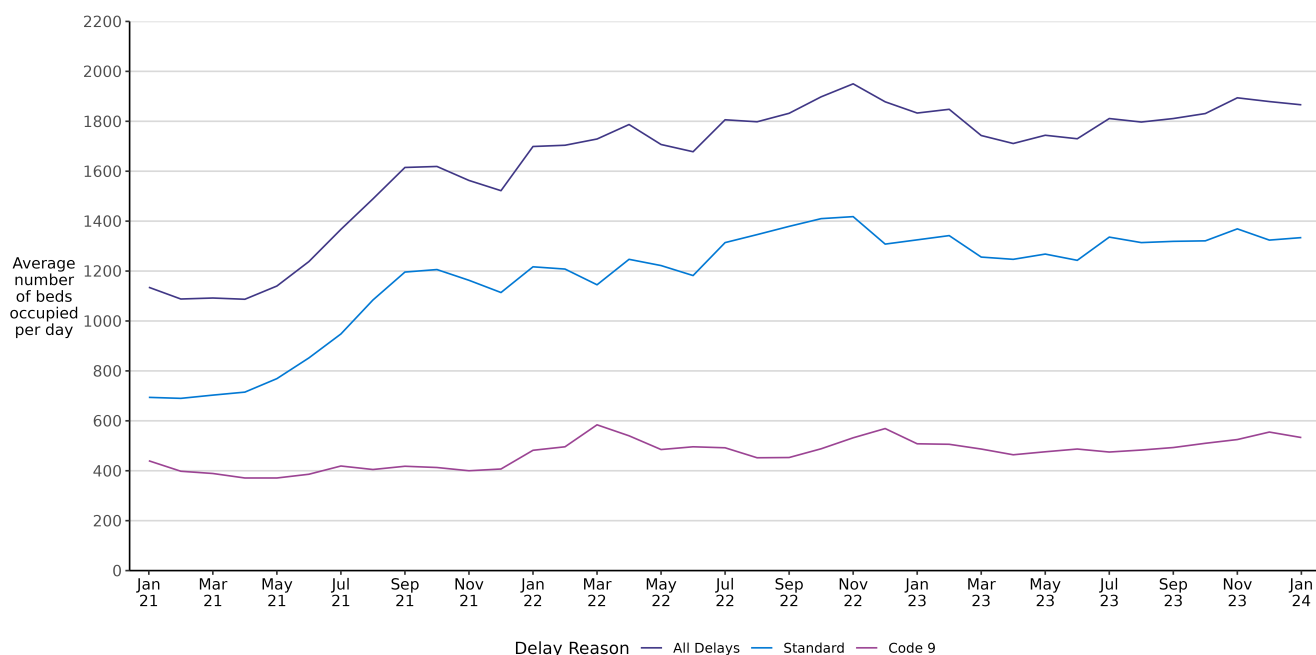
The average (median) length of delay for people delayed at the January 2024 census was 22 days, a decrease of 7 days from December 2023. This equals the November 2023 figure and is the lowest average length of delay in the past three months, October to December 2023.

Average number of beds occupied per day

In January 2024 the average number of beds occupied per day due to people delayed in hospital was 1,866. This is lower than the number seen in November 2023 (1,894) and December 2023 (1,879) but higher than the October 2023 figure (1,831).

The chart below 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 Discharge bed use in Scotland from January 2021 to January 2024, by delay reason¹



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

Delayed days in hospital

In January 2024 there were 57,860 days spent in hospital by people whose discharge was delayed. This is a 2% increase from the number of delayed days in January 2023 (56,826).

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 to January 2024 XLSX | 4.6MB


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 to January 2024 XLSX | 6.0MB

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 to January 2024 XLSX | 2.8MB

Open data

Data from this publication is available to download from the Scottish Health and Social Care Open Data portal.

 Delayed discharges open data

Contacts

General enquiries

If you have an enquiry relating to this publication, please contact Simon Quirk at phs.delayedischarges@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. See data definitions and reporting for more information.

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

Statistical accreditation

This is an Accredited official statistics publication

Accredited official statistics are called National Statistics in the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007. Accredited official 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 above.

All official statistics should comply with the UK Statistics Authority's Code of Practice which promotes the production and dissemination of official statistics that inform decision making.

Once statistics become accredited official statistics, it is a statutory requirement that the Code of Practice shall continue to be observed.

These official statistics were independently reviewed by the Office for Statistics Regulation in September 2011. They comply with the standards of trustworthiness, quality and value in the Code of Practice for Statistics and should be labelled 'Accredited official statistics'.

Our statistical practice is regulated by the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR). OSR sets the standards of trustworthiness, quality and value in the Code of Practice for Statistics that all producers of official statistics should adhere to. You are welcome to contact us directly with any comments about how we meet these standards.

Alternatively, you can contact OSR by emailing regulation@statistics.gov.uk or via the OSR website.

Visit the UK Statistics Authority website for more information about the Code of Practice and Accredited official statistics.

Visit our website for further information about our statistics and PHS as an Official Statistics producer.

Pre-release access

Under terms of the "Pre-release Access to Official Statistics (Scotland) Order 2008", PHS is 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 Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC)
- NHS board chief executives
- NHS board communication leads
- Chief Officers of Integrated Joint Boards formed under the Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Act 2014 (external website).

More information about delayed discharges

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

About Public Health Scotland (PHS)

PHS is a knowledge-based and intelligence driven organisation with a critical reliance on data and information to enable it to be an independent voice for the public's health, leading collaboratively and effectively across the Scottish public health system, accountable at local and national levels, and providing leadership and focus for achieving better health and wellbeing outcomes for the population. Our statistics comply with the Code of Practice for Statistics in terms of trustworthiness, high quality and public value. This also means that we keep data secure at all stages, through collection, processing, analysis and output production, and adhere to the Office for National Statistics 'Five Safes' of data privacy.

Metadata

Publication title	Delayed discharges in NHSScotland
Description	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>
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	<p>The number of people delayed as at a monthly census snapshot taken on the last Thursday of the month.</p> <p>The number of bed days occupied by people delayed in their discharge from hospital in the calendar month.</p> <p>The number of discharges from hospital following a period of delay in the calendar month.</p>

These data were submitted by NHS boards to Public Health Scotland in February 2024.

Release date	5 March 2024
Frequency	Monthly
Timeframe of data and timeliness	Data are available for publication within six to eight weeks of the census month.
Continuity of data	<p>NHS boards submit delayed discharge information to PHS for national reporting purposes.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>
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	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>
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	<p>Number of delays by length and reason at the census point.</p> <p>Number of bed days occupied by delayed patients in a calendar month</p>

measurement	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 accreditation	Accredited official statistics
UK Statistics Authority Assessment	These official statistics were independently reviewed by the Office for Statistics Regulation in September 2011.
Last published	6 February 2024
Next published	2 April 2024
Date of first publication	Historic quarterly data published from December 2000 Monthly data published from June 2015 First annual publication in June 2016
Help email	phs.delayedischarges@phs.scot
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