

Delayed discharges in NHSScotland monthly

Figures for December 2021

A National Statistics publication for Scotland



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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 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
- number of people experiencing a delay in discharge from hospital at the monthly census point – the last Thursday of the 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 1 March 2022.

Main points

Delayed days in hospital

In December 2021, there were 47,177 days spent in hospital by people whose discharge was delayed.

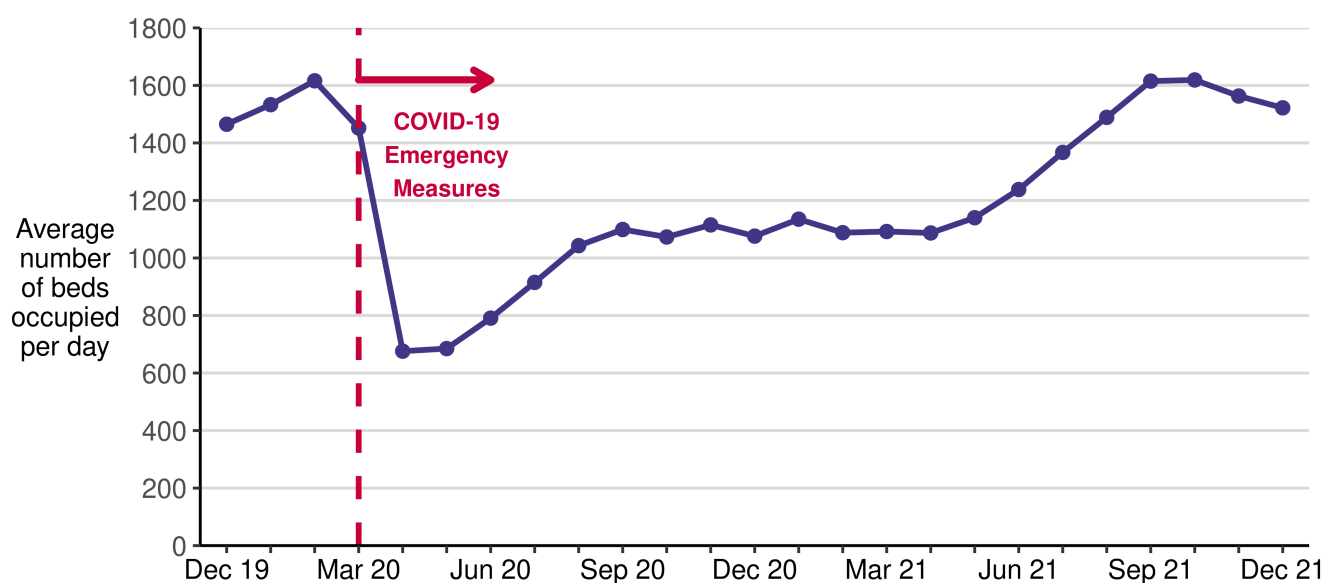
This is an increase of 41% compared with the number of delayed days in December 2020 (33,343).

Average number of beds occupied per day

In December 2021, the average number of beds occupied per day due to delayed discharges was 1,522, which is more consistent with pre-pandemic figures.

This is a decrease of 3% compared to November 2021 when the daily average was 1,563.

Delayed discharge bed use in Scotland from December 2019 to December 2021



Number of people delayed

At the December 2021 census point, there were 1,379 people delayed.

This is a decrease of 8% compared to the November 2021 census point when 1,500 people were delayed.

Number of people delayed more than three days

Of those delayed at the December 2021 census point, 1,266 people were delayed more than three days.


- Health and social care reasons accounted for 913 delays (72%).
- Complex needs accounted for 321 delays (25%).
- Patient and family-related reasons accounted for 32 delays (3%).

Downloads

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


Bed days occupied

These tables report on the number of bed days associated with delayed discharges within a calendar month, by delay type.

 [Bed days occupied tables to December 2021 XLSX | 1.0MB](#)

Discharges following delay

These tables report on the number of discharges from hospital to home or placement following a period of delay within a calendar month.

 [Discharges following delay tables to December 2021 XLSX | 83.1KB](#)

Census tables

These tables report 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
- delay length

 [Census tables to December 2021 XLSX | 9.7MB](#)

Open data

 [Delayed discharges open data](#)

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

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

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 ([external website](#)).

Find out more about National Statistics on the UK Statistics Authority website ([external website](#)).

Early access

Under terms of the "Pre-Release Access to Official Statistics (Scotland) Order 2008", we 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.

Standard pre-release access for this publication is given to:

- Scottish Government Health Department
- 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

The Data and Intelligence site provides more information about delayed discharges.

Contacts

General enquiries

If you have an enquiry relating to this publication, please email 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.

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 January 2022.

Release date

1 February 2022

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 from 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. Limited trend information is available pre and post-July 2016 due to the definitional changes and relevant notes have been added to the tables to explain this.

The Data and Intelligence site provides details on definitions and data requirements.

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. The Data and Intelligence site provides further details on the revisions policy.

Revisions relevant to this publication

This publication has no revisions.

Concepts and definitions

The Data and Intelligence site provides access to the delayed discharge data definitions manual and national data requirements (both 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 FOI requests) from a variety of customers and parliamentary questions.

Accuracy

The data are considered accurate. Data are validated locally by partnerships. We carry out further validation checks in consultation with NHS boards.

Completeness

100% of the data is used for analysis.

Comparability

Data are not comparable outwith Scotland.

Limited trend information is available pre and post-July 2016 due to the definitional changes effective from 1 July 2016. Relevant notes have been added to the published tables to explain this.

Accessibility

It is the policy of Public Health Scotland to make its websites and products accessible according to our accessibility statement.

Coherence and clarity

All delayed discharge reports are accessible on this website. You can view the delayed discharge monthly reports or delayed discharge annual reports.

Tables and charts are presented within an interactive Excel workbook 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

Our protocol on statistical disclosure is followed.

Official Statistics designation

National Statistics

UK Statistics Authority Assessment

The statistics last underwent a full assessment by the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR) against the Code of Practice in September 2011. Their website provides access to the full assessment of the statistics.

Last published

11 January 2022

Next published

1 March 2022

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

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