Hospital Outpatient Activity

2018-19
Introduction

This publication describes NHS-funded outpatient activity in England in 2018-19.

The data source for this publication is Hospital Episode Statistics (HES).

Records in the HES Outpatient database are called ‘appointments’. There is one row per appointment, regardless of whether or not it is attended. Appointments which are attended are called ‘attendances’. A patient is often invited to a series of appointments, the first of which is known as the ‘first appointment’. An individual patient may have more than one series of attendances in a given period, so first appointments are not the same as a count of patients.

For the 2018-19 financial year, HES has collected over 123 million records detailing outpatient appointments at NHS hospitals in England or performed in the independent sector, and commissioned by the English NHS.
In 2018-19, there were 123.4 million outpatient appointments, of which 96.4 million were attended by patients.

Outpatient appointments (74.9 million to 123.4 million) and attended appointments (60.7 million to 96.4 million) have both increased by over half between 2008-09 to 2018-19.

Source: NHS Digital

For more information: Summary Report 1, Hospital outpatient activity 2018-19
Attendances, whether first or subsequent, as a proportion of total appointments have decreased over the period from 81.0 per cent in 2008-09 to 78.2 per cent in 2018-19.
Outpatient appointments for selected attendance types, 2008-09 to 2018-19

The number of appointments where the patient ‘Did not attend’ continues to be less than that for Hospital or Patient Cancellations.

Between 2008-09 and 2018-19 ‘Did not attend’s have increased by 32 per cent. Whereas Hospital and Patient Cancellations have more than doubled in the same period with increases of 150 per cent and 124 per cent respectively.

Source: NHS Digital
For more information: Summary Report 3, Hospital outpatient activity, 2018-19
The proportion of attended appointments has **decreased** from **81.0 per cent** in 2008-09 to **78.2 per cent** in 2018-19.

The proportion of appointments which were not attended by the patient without notice (‘did not attend’) **declined** over the period from **8.0 per cent** in 2008-09 to **6.4 per cent** in 2018-19.

However, the proportion of all appointments that were cancelled by either the hospital or patient has **increased**, from **10.4 per cent** to **15.0 per cent** over the same period.

Source: NHS Digital

For more information: **Summary Report 4, Hospital outpatient activity, 2018-19**
The North of England recorded the most outpatient activity with the highest numbers of both attendances with **27.9 million** (28.9 per cent) and appointments with **34.6 million** (28.0 per cent).

The South West of England has recorded the lowest outpatient activity with **8.4 million** attendances (8.8 per cent) and **10.9 million** (8.9 per cent) appointments.

For more information: Summary Report 5, Hospital outpatient activity, 2018-19

Source: NHS Digital
Proportion of 1st attendances and subsequent attendances by Commissioning Region, 2018-19

The Midlands and East of England recorded the highest number of first attendances with 9.0 million (29.5 per cent)

The North of England recorded the highest number of subsequent attendances with 19.7 million (26.8 per cent)

Source: NHS Digital

For more information: Summary Report 6, Hospital outpatient activity, 2018-19
Five Treatment Specialties with the greatest number of attendances with the corresponding non-attendances, 2018-19

Ophthalmology, Trauma & Orthopaedics and Physiotherapy specialities have recorded the highest levels of attendances in 2018-19 with 7.8 million, 7.6 million and 5.3 million attendances respectively.

The five most common treatment specialties account for 30.1 per cent of all outpatient attendances.

Physiotherapy recorded the lowest ratio between attended and did not attend appointments with approximately 10.4 attendances for each appointment where the patient did not attend.

Source: NHS Digital
For more information: Summary Report 7, Hospital outpatient activity, 2018-19
Outpatient attendances by age and gender (incl. maternity specific attendances), 2018-19

Women comprised **55.5 million** attendances (57.8 per cent), compared to **40.6 million** for men (42.1 per cent)

For women, the age group with greatest number of attendances was **30-34 years**; for men it was **70-74 years**

The most attendances were made by patients aged between 60-79 years with **30.7 million** (31.9 percent) for both males and females.

39.0 percent of attendances for women aged 20-39 years were for maternity services, defined as where the treatment specialty was either ‘Obstetrics’ or ‘Midwife Episode’

Source: NHS Digital
For more information: Summary Report 8, Hospital outpatient activity, 2018-19
Outpatient did not attends by age and gender, 2018-19

4.3 million (54.0 per cent) of did not attends were for females with a corresponding 3.6 million (45.9 per cent) for males.

The 20-39 years old age group, accounts for the largest proportion (34.9 per cent) among females.

For males, 40-59 years has the corresponding proportion primacy (27.6 per cent).

Source: NHS Digital
For more information: Summary Report 9, Hospital outpatient activity, 2018-19
Rate of 1st attendance per 100,000 population by IMD decile, 2018-19

The IMD decile with the highest attendance rate was ‘most deprived 10%’ with just over 56,200 first attendances per 100,000 people.

The ‘more deprived 30-40%’ group had the lowest rate with just under 52,600 first attendances per 100,000 people.

The ‘more deprived 10-20%’ group had the highest volume of 1st attendances (3.2 million).

Source: NHS Digital
For more information: Summary Report 10, Hospital Outpatient Activity 2018-19
Rate of 1st attendance by ethnicity (grouped) for every 100,000 population and proportion of 1st attendances against all attendances, 2018-19

Just under one-third (31.6 percent) of attendances were first attendances (30.4 million) for all ethnic groups, including where ethnicity was unknown.

The ‘Other’ ethnic group recorded both the highest proportion of 1st attendances (32.6 per cent) against all attended appointments within the ethnic group (1.8 million) and the highest rate of 1st attendances by population with just over 95,000 for every 100,000 people.

For more information: Summary Report 11, Hospital Outpatient Activity 2018-19
The ‘Black’ ethnic group recorded the highest proportion of did not attends (10.8 per cent) against all appointments within the ethnic group (3.8 million).

‘Other’ ethnic group recorded the highest rate of did not attends by population with just under 34,000 for every 100,000 people.

Source: NHS Digital
For more information: Summary Report 12, Hospital Outpatient Activity 2018-19
Additional Information

Further guidance and associated documentation
This is an Official Statistics publication

This publication may be requested in large print or other formats.

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