

Publication Report



General Practice – GP workforce and practice population statistics to 2010

14 December 2010



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About ISD

Scotland has some of the best health service data in the world combining high quality, consistency, national coverage and the ability to link data to allow patient based analysis and follow up.

Information Services Division (ISD) is a business operating unit of NHS National Services Scotland and has been in existence for over 40 years. We are an essential support service to NHSScotland and the Scottish Government and others, responsive to the needs of NHSScotland as the delivery of health and social care evolves.

Purpose: To deliver effective national and specialist intelligence services to improve the health and wellbeing of people in Scotland.

Mission: Better Information, Better Decisions, Better Health

Vision: To be a valued partner in improving health and wellbeing in Scotland by providing a world class intelligence service.

Official Statistics

Information Services Division (ISD) is the principal and authoritative source of statistics on health and care services in Scotland. ISD is designated by legislation as a producer of 'Official Statistics'. Our official statistics publications are produced to a high professional standard and comply with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. The Code of Practice is produced and monitored by the UK Statistics Authority which is independent of Government. Under the Code of Practice, the format, content and timing of statistics publications are the responsibility of professional staff working within ISD.

ISD's statistical publications are currently classified as one of the following:

- National Statistics (ie assessed by the UK Statistics Authority as complying with the Code of Practice)
- National Statistics (ie legacy, still to be assessed by the UK Statistics Authority)
- Official Statistics (ie still to be assessed by the UK Statistics Authority)
- other (not Official Statistics)

Further information on ISD's statistics, including compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics, and on the UK Statistics Authority, is available on the [ISD website](#).

Introduction

The information released in this publication falls into two main parts. The first part presents data on GPs contracted to work in Scottish practices in the years 2004 to 2010. Information is presented on the age and gender profile of these GPs, also on their designation (e.g. salaried GP or GP registrar) at Scotland, NHS Board and Community Health Partnership (CHP/CHCP) level.

The second part of the release gives information on the practices and the patients registered with them, including

- The broad age distribution of patients at NHS Board and CHP level
- The deprivation and urban/rural mix of practice populations.

Key points

- There has been a steady increase in the headcount of GPs contracted to work in Scottish practices since the introduction of the General Medical Services contract in 2004, rising from 4,456 in 2004 to 4,960 in 2010 (an increase of 11.3%).
- In the same time period there has been a large rise in the number of salaried GP posts, from 188 in 2004 to 527 in 2010 (an increase of 180%).

Results and Commentary

GP workforce

There has been a steady increase in the headcount of GPs contracted to work in Scottish general practices over the last 6 years, rising from 4,456 in 2004 to 4,960 in 2010 (an increase of 11.3%). At least part of the increase in headcount will be due to an increase in the number of GPs working part-time. Whether GPs work full-time or part-time is not available from these data. However an estimation of the whole time equivalent (WTE) number of GPs for 2009 can be found in the 2009 National Primary Care Workforce Survey results at: <http://www.isdscotland.org/Health-Topics/General-Practice/GPs-and-Other-Practice-Workforce/national-primary-care-workforce-survey-2009.asp>.

An increasing proportion of contracted GPs are female and in 2009, for the first time, females outnumbered males. This trend has continued in 2010 with females now making up 51.3% of contracted GPs and males 48.7%.

There has been a marked increase in the headcount of GP registrars (now referred to as specialist trainees) between 2004 and 2010, from 282 in 2004 to 503 in 2010 (an increase of 78.4%). This is related to an increase in the number of training places available and changes in the training arrangements from 2008. From 2008 GP trainees work in practices during two stages of their training whereas historically registrars would work in practice primarily at the end stages of their training.

The GP figures reported here do not include GPs who work only as locums (also known as sessional GPs) or the majority of GPs who work only in Out of Hours services. The actual number of GPs working in Scotland is therefore higher than reported here.

Longer term trend information on GP workforce is published on ISD's main workforce pages at www.isdscotland.org/Health-Topics/Workforce/.

Practice counts and practice population statistics

The average size of a Scottish GP practice in terms of numbers of registered patients was 5,466 at 1st October 2010.

Much of the information presented in this publication, such as reference files on deprivation status and urban/rural locations of practice populations, is useful as a resource for the NHS, the Scottish and other governments, general practices, researchers and others.

Glossary

GP	General Medical Practitioner
GP Registrar	A medical practitioner who is being trained in general practice. Now also known as a GP Specialist Trainee.
GP Retainee	A GP who can be utilised by a practice as they are required. This primarily aims to allow female GPs returning to work after maternity leave to keep in touch with medicine, but it does not exclude men.
Salaried GP	A GP who is employed by the practice or by the NHS Board on a salaried basis
CHP	Community Health Partnership
WTE	Whole Time Equivalent. This is an estimated measurement of the staff resource available, taking into account part time working.

List of Tables

Name	Time period	File & size
Number of GPs in post by designation in Scotland	2004-2010	Excel [37kb]
Number of GPs in post by designation by NHS Board	2004-2010	Excel [62kb]
Number of GPs in post by designation by CHP/CHCP	2006-2010	Excel [79kb]
Number of GPs in post by gender and age group	2004-2010	Excel [65kb]
Number of GPs in post by NHS Board and gender	2004-2010	Excel [83kb]
Number of GPs in post by CHP/CHCP and gender*	2010*	Excel [64kb]
Number of practices by NHS Board and numbers of patients registered with practices by age group and practice type*	2010*	Excel [43kb]
Number of practices by CHP/CHCP and numbers of patients registered with practices by age group and practice type*	2010*	Excel [66kb]
Practice populations by deprivation status*	2010*	Excel [147kb]
Practice populations by urban/rural classification*	2010*	Excel [194kb]
Practice population trends by gender and age group	1999-2010	Excel [1961kb]
Practices opted to provide Out of Hours services	2006-2010	Excel [33kb]

Where file names and time periods are marked with an asterisk (), this indicates that equivalent tables for earlier years are also available on the General Practice area of ISD's website. To access these earlier data tables and other information related to general practices and their workforce, click on the relevant sub-topic area below:

- [GPs & Other Practice Workforce](#)
- [Practices and their Populations](#)

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Further Information

Further information on this topic can be found on the [General Practice area of the ISD website](#)

Appendix

A1 – Publication Metadata (including revisions details)

Metadata Indicator	Description
Publication title	General Practice – GP workforce and practice population statistics to 2010
Description	Headcounts of GPs contracted to work in Scottish general practices in the years 2004 to 2010 and information on practices and their registered patients
Theme	Health and Social Care
Topic	General Practice
Format	Excel workbooks
Data source(s)	General Practitioner Contractor Database (GPCD); General Medical Services (GMS) Data Warehouse; Community Health Index (CHI) database
Date that data is acquired	11 November 2010
Release date	14 December 2010
Frequency	Annual
Timeframe of data and timeliness	Data up to 01 October 2010, normal timeliness for this publication, no delay occurred. Reports data since 2004.
Continuity of data	Reports on data from 2004
Revisions statement	These data are not subject to planned major revisions. There may be minor revisions to already published statistics in future editions of this publication in the event that any underlying errors in the data sources are found and corrected.
Revisions relevant to this publication	None
Concepts and definitions	See Glossary and footnotes of Excel workbooks for further information
Relevance and key uses of the statistics	Making information publicly available for planning, provision of services, research.
Accuracy	<p>Information on the GP workforce and the practices within which they work is collated and recorded routinely by NHS Boards in line with regulatory and operational requirements. This information is therefore considered to have a high degree of overall accuracy.</p> <p>Maintenance of health service records on patients registered to practices is a core administrative function of the NHS and therefore the information on numbers of patients registered to each practice is expected to have a good degree of accuracy.</p>
Completeness	The data are considered complete.
Comparability	Scottish GP workforce information is broadly

	<p>comparable with GP workforce information for the other UK countries. However there are some variations in how the individual GP designations/contract types are described, and care must be taken to ensure that like for like groups are being compared (eg whether GP trainees or retainees are or are not included in each group being compared). The headcount information also takes no account of whether differing proportions of GPs in each country work on a full time or part time basis.</p> <p>Information on the numbers of general practices and the numbers of patients registered to them is fairly closely comparable with that for other UK countries.</p> <p>Information on the numbers of practice patients by deprivation group or urban/rural group is not directly comparable to information for other countries, as the classifications used to describe the deprivation or urban/rural status of populations are specific to Scotland.</p>
Accessibility	It is the policy of ISD Scotland to make its web sites and products accessible according to published guidelines .
Coherence and clarity	Tables and charts are accessible via the ISD website at: http://www.isdscotland.org/Health-Topics/General-Practice/
Value type and unit of measure	Numbers and percentages
Disclosure	The ISD protocol on Statistical Disclosure Protocol is followed. A copy of this protocol is available at: http://www.isdscotland.org/isdscotland/About-ISD/About-Our-Statistics/
Official Statistics designation	National Statistics
UK Statistics Authority Assessment	Awaiting assessment by UK Statistics Authority
Last published	26 January 2010
Next published	13 December 2011
Date of first publication	Paper publications since 1970s; Web publications since 1996.
Help e-mail	nss.isdGeneralPractice@nhs.net
Date form completed	April 2011

A2 – Early Access details (including Pre-Release Access)

Pre-Release Access

Under terms of the "Pre-Release Access to Official Statistics (Scotland) Order 2008", ISD 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 and, separately, those receiving extended Pre-Release Access.

Standard Pre-Release Access:
Scottish Government Health Department
NHS Board Chief Executives
NHS Board Communication leads

Extended Pre-Release Access

Extended Pre-Release Access of 8 working days is given to a small number of named individuals in the Scottish Government Health Department (Analytical Services Division). This Pre-Release Access is for the sole purpose of enabling that department to gain an understanding of the statistics prior to briefing others in Scottish Government (during the period of standard Pre-Release Access).

Scottish Government Health Department (Analytical Services Division)