

Essential facts regarding A&E Services

This factsheet is intended to provide all interested parties with a summary of the key data that should inform any debate concerning Emergency Departments (EDs) in Wales.

Patients

1. There were 1,030,045 attendances at Welsh Emergency Departments in 2017-18.ⁱ
2. The UK has the 5th lowest A&E attendance rate of 11 comparable nations.ⁱⁱ
3. In 2011-12, average four-hour standard performance at all Emergency Departments was 89%. In 2017-18 it fell to 81.5%.ⁱⁱⁱ
4. In Major Emergency Departments, four-hour performance has deteriorated by 10 percentage points from an average of 87.0% (2011-12) to 76.9% (2017-18).^{iv}
5. From 2011-12 to 2017-18 the number of people who spent more than eight hours in an Emergency Department has increased by 52,878, or 205%.^v
6. From 2013-14 to 2017-18 the number of people who spent more than twelve hours in an Emergency Department has increased by 27,421 (238%).^{vi}
7. Attendances over the age of 75 accounted for 13.8% of total ED attendances in 2017-18.^{vii}

Emergency Departments

8. NHS Wales' Accident & Emergency sites are classed as Major Emergency Departments - a consultant led 24-hour service with appropriate resuscitation facilities - or Minor Injury Units (MIU) which may or may not be open 24 hours.^{viii}
9. There are 13 Major Emergency Departments in Wales and 21 MIU sites.^{ix} These are provided by seven regional NHS Health Boards.^x
10. Annual attendances at Major Emergency Departments range from around 29,300 (Bronglais General Hospital) to 135,500 (University Hospital of Wales).^{xi}
11. There were 47,072 more attendances at all Emergency Departments in 2017-18 than in 2010-11. This is equivalent to the annual workload of one District General Emergency Department.^{xii}
12. In 2017-18, there was one consultant for every 13,661 Emergency Department attendance.^{xiii}
13. If we achieve the staffing levels set out in RCEM Wales Vision 2020, there will be one consultant for every 6,959 Emergency Department attendance.^{xiv}

Staff

14. In 2017 there were 75.4 Whole Time Equivalent emergency medicine consultants working in the NHS in Wales.^{xv}
15. The emergency medicine consultant workforce has grown by 53.9% since 2010. However, this growth has not kept up with demand.^{xvi}
16. Since 2015 at least 112 emergency medicine consultants and 171 trainees have left the UK to work overseas.^{xvii}
17. Whilst emergency medicine training posts have a 100% fill rate at ST1 level in Wales, attrition rates among emergency medicine trainees is high relative to other medical specialties because of the intensity of work in Emergency Departments.^{xviii}
18. The Welsh NHS spends approximately £14 million per year on agency, bank and locum doctors in Emergency Departments.^{xix}

Beds and Flow

19. Exit block occurs when patients cannot be moved in a timely manner to a hospital ward because of a lack of available beds. Exit block causes harm to patients and avoidable mortality.
20. In 2016/17, there were 1,292.6 fewer available beds in the NHS in Wales than there were in 2010/11. This represents a 10.6% decline in the total hospital bed base.^{xx}
21. In 2010/11, average bed occupancy across NHS Wales was 84.7%. This has risen to 87.4%.^{xxi}
22. Delayed transfers of care (DTOC) continue to pose a serious problem across the UK and are a cause of exit block.
23. In Wales, the number of patients subject to delayed transfers of care has started to decline. The total number of DTOC cases in 2013 was 5393. In 2017, this fell by 6.5% to 5042.^{xxii}
24. In over half of DTOC cases in Wales, delays are a direct result of hospital staffs' inability to discharge patients into an appropriate social care setting.
25. Whilst more people require care in the community, data from Stats Wales shows that the number of care homes in Wales for older adults has reduced by nearly 9% and therefore the number of places has fallen by almost 5%.^{xxiii}

Finance

26. The total recorded expenditure for the NHS in Wales in 2016-17 was £6,381 million, or £2,050 per head of the population.^{xxiv}
27. The average cost of a new Emergency Department attendance is estimated to be £149.^{xxv}
28. In February 2018, the Welsh Government announced £100 million to transform health and social service in Wales.^{xxvi}

References

-
- i Stats Wales, [Performance against 4 hour waiting times target by hospital](#)
 - ii The Commonwealth Fund, [International Health Policy Survey of Adults](#) (2016)
 - iii Stats Wales, [Performance against 4 hour waiting times target by hospital](#)
 - iv Stats Wales, [Performance against 4 hour waiting times target by local health board](#)
 - v Stats Wales, [Performance against 8 hour waiting times target by hospital](#)
 - vi Stats Wales, [Performance against 12 hour waiting times target by hospital](#)
 - vii Stats Wales, [Mean and Median time spent in A&E and A&E Attendances by age band](#) (April 2017 – March 2018)
 - viii NHS Wales, [Unscheduled and Emergency Care](#)
 - ix IDS Scotland, [NHS Scotland Accident & Emergency Sites](#) (updated August 2017)
 - x NHS Wales, [Directory](#)
 - xi Stats Wales, [Performance against 4 hour waiting times target by hospital](#)
 - xii Ibid.
 - xiii Stats Wales, [Performance against 4 hour waiting times target by hospital](#) and [Medical and dental staff by specialty and year](#)
 - xiv RCEM Wales, [Vision 2020](#)
 - xv Stats Wales, [Medical and dental staff by specialty and year](#)
 - xvi Ibid.
 - xvii RCEM Membership database February 2018
 - xviii NHS England, HEE, NHSI and RCEM, [Securing the future workforce for emergency departments](#) (2017)
 - xix [Data released in 2017](#) revealed that Health Boards across Wales spent nearly £14m on agency, bank and locum doctors to cover shifts in emergency units during 2016.
 - xx Stats Wales, [NHS beds summary data by year](#)
 - xxi Stats Wales, [NHS beds summary data by year](#)
 - xxii Stats Wales, [Delayed transfers of care](#)
 - xxiii Welsh Government, [Delayed transfers of care in Wales, 2016-17](#) (2017) and Stats Wales, [CSSIW Services and Places by Setting Type and Year](#)
 - xxiv Welsh Government, [NHS expenditure programme budgets](#) (2016-17)
 - xxv [Welsh Government finance in 2015-16](#), table 15.10
 - xxvi Welsh Government, [£100 million transformation fund](#) (February 2018)