

NHS Scotland workforce statistics newsletter - 23 October

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Welcome

This quarterly newsletter aims to keep users up to date with news from the Data Group at PSD Scotland. It will mainly focus on developments related to Official Statistics publications. However, we will also share updates on other TDI reports, along with helpful links to make navigating the website easier.

In August the Scottish Government published its workforce planning improvement framework. The Framework was developed collaboratively by the Scottish Government and Health Board workforce planners and those with a data and intelligence background.

The Framework examined workforce planning roles and responsibilities, leadership and capability, and data intelligence and quality. One of the actions arising from the examination of workforce planning roles and responsibilities was to establish a national operational workforce planning support function in PSD Scotland to enable evidence-based workforce planning.

Please let us know what you'd like to hear in this newsletter. You can get in touch by contacting the [Data Group](#).

Our next newsletter will be released in January.

NHS Scotland Workforce Official Statistics

Latest publication news

The latest publication was released on 1 September on [Turas Data Intelligence](#). There was the usual quarterly update to NHS Scotland employment and vacancy statistics at 30 June 2026.

There were a few new additions so the [NHS Scotland workforce](#) dashboard.

- A new chart showing the distribution of the workforce by NHS Board is available on the **Employment - by NHS Board** report.
- For the first time, the dashboard includes the mean whole time equivalent per person employed by NHS Scotland. This statistic can be selected using the Employment measures filter on most employment reports.
- Employment per 10,000 population has also been published for the first time. This measure is available in both the **Employment over time** and **Employment - by NHS Board** reports.
- Medical agency locum expenditure, which is published annually in June, represents the combined expenditure for resident doctors and senior doctors (Consultants and Staff and Associate Specialist grades). In the September release, we published a breakdown of expenditure for resident doctors and senior doctors for the year ending 31 March 2026. This can be viewed by using the Grade filter on the **Bank and agency** report.
- The employment data table has been enhanced to allow users to view multiple employment measures simultaneously (headcount, WTE and mean WTE). A separate column is displayed for each selected measure enabling users can export multiple employment measures in a single download.

A revision was made on 1 September 2026 to the average whole time equivalent (WTE) for nursing and midwifery bank and agency staff for the year ending 31 March 2026. The previously published Scotland average WTE was 7,320. Following the identification and correction of a

calculation error, the correct average WTE is 7,523. This revision affects the average WTE figures for nursing and midwifery bank and agency staff across all NHS Boards.

The average WTE is calculated by dividing the total hours worked in bank and agency roles by the annual conditioned hours. Annual conditioned hours are calculated by multiplying weekly conditioned hours by 52. The error occurred because an incorrect weekly conditioned hours value was used in the calculation for 31 March 2026. A value of 36 hours was used in error. This has now been corrected to 37 hours.

What to expect in the next NHS Scotland workforce Official Statistics publication

The next publication will be released on 1 December 2026 and will present data at the 30 September 2026 census. This release will include the quarterly update to the NHS Scotland employment and vacancy statistics, alongside annual updates to Advanced Nurse Practitioner employment, Clinical Nurse Specialist employment (see more on this in the Clinical Nurse Specialist workforce section below), nursing and midwifery student statistics and pharmacy managed service workforce statistics.

In primary care, the General Practitioners and Dentists workforce statistics will be updated.

On 1 April 2026, the second phase of the [Reduced Working Week](#) came into effect, with the Conditioned Hours for Agenda for Change staff reducing from 37 hours to 36 hours. To support understanding of the impact of this change, a paper exploring the changes in workforce headcount and contracted hours during the implementation will be published alongside the release.

The outcome of the [review](#) of the National Treatment Centre statistics was reported on 11 June 2026. **We are still investigating the future scope and feasibility of these statistics and as such there will be no update to these statistics in December 2026.**

Information on our statistical work programme is available on our website:

<https://turasdata.nes.nhs.scot/about-our-data-and-reports/official-statistics-information/future-development-plans/?pageid=13236>.

Nursing Agency Expenditure and Hours Data

We're scoping a change of data source for Nursing Agency expenditure data published in [the NHS Scotland workforce Official Statistics publication](#). Currently data is collected manually from boards at each annual census (31 March). Information on agency hours used and the associated financial cost is collected.

The Nursing & Medical Costs team at PSD Scotland produces a report on the financial cost of nursing agency use for each Health Board. This is the same source used for the medical agency expenditure. This central source could be used to replace the financial cost information we currently collect manually. However, the agency hours used is not available from this source.

We're interested to hear from any stakeholders who access the nursing agency hours or whole time equivalent (WTE) data we make available via our Official Statistics publication. If you use

this data or have any questions about this proposed switch, please reach out to us at Datagroup@nes.scot.nhs.uk.

Psychology and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) Workforce Official Statistics

The latest [NHS Scotland Psychology Services Workforce publication](#) and [NHS Scotland CAMHS workforce publication](#) were released on 1 September.

As part of work to develop a report on the national mental health workforce, we worked with NHS Boards over the summer to improve the accuracy of the data we collect about the CAMHS and Psychology Services workforces. The improvements made have enabled us to combine the role-specific information we hold on these staff employments with the more general employment information we access from administrative data.

The next publication will be released on 1 December 2026 (based on the 30 September 2026 census). This publication will include updates to the employment, vacancy and training data.

General Practice Workforce Survey

On 15 September 2026 we published results of the latest [General Practice Workforce Survey](#) which provides information on numbers, vacancies, locum use (for GPs) and absences of General Practitioners (GPs), Nurses and other primary care staff in Scotland on 31 March 2026. This is an Official Statistics in Development publication.

The response rate of this year's survey was 100%, an increase from 75% in 2025. This is likely due to survey completion being linked to eligibility for [additional funding](#). As a result, figures for Non-General Practitioners are presented unweighted, while General Practitioner figures continue to be weighted using headcount data from the National Primary Care Clinicians Database ([NPCCD](#)).

As we develop this publication, we would like to hear from our users to ensure that this publication and dashboard meet their needs. A [survey](#) to collect feedback is available.

In our [development plan](#), we had planned to release data on the WTE of the General Practice workforce as Official statistics, with the data on the absences, vacancies and locum use remaining as Official Statistics in Development. However, the completeness of the survey has shown that a measurement error exists between the GP workforce from the NPCCD and the Survey. Whilst this is investigated, we will continue to publish these WTE statistics as Official Statistics in Development.

Primary Care Out of Hours Workforce Survey

The Primary Care Out of Hours (OOH) Workforce Survey captures information from the primary care OOH services in each NHS Board area. The annual Official Statistics publication provides information on General Practitioners (GPs) and nurses working in OOH services, challenges and

experiences in filling shifts and use of multi-disciplinary teams within OOH in the year ending 31 March 2026.

In comparison to last year, the Out of Hours Workforce Survey was sent to NHS Boards separate from the General Practice Workforce Survey. The official survey deadline was in the week commencing 27 August 2026. While most NHS Boards have submitted their returns, some data are still outstanding. The publication date has not yet been confirmed and will be announced once all data have been received and processed. We currently anticipate publication in December 2026 or January 2027.

Medical Specialty Training and Transition to the GP Workforce

The next release of Medical specialty training and transition to the GP workforce will be published on the 8 December.

This Official Statistics in Development publication reports the number of doctors starting and completing General Practice (GP) specialty training programme in each year, the transition probability between the start of specialty training and completion, and between completion of specialty training and participation in the GP workforce. The publication also includes the number of doctors participating in the GP workforce together with the inflows and outflows of GPs that determine this number.

In the December release, we will expand the training statistics to include additional medical specialties. Our [website](#) will be kept up to date with the statistical work programme. Users can provide feedback by completing a [short form](#) or getting in touch with the [Data Group](#) directly.

Mental Health Workforce

NHS Scotland mental health workforce statistics are [available](#) on Turas Data Intelligence. Please share with any colleagues who may be interested, and [let us know](#) if you have any questions or feedback about these statistics. These are Official Statistics in Development and your feedback will inform next steps.

Clinical Nurse Specialist Workforce

The next publication on the Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS) workforce in NHS Scotland is planned for 1 December 2026. The publication will provide a point-in-time analysis of the CNS workforce employed on 30 September 2026.

Boards were requested to review CNS staff records ahead of the planned census using supplied data quality extracts. We currently publish this information bi-annually with the last publication released in June (census date 31 March 2026, [Clinical Nurse Specialists | Turas Data Intelligence](#)).

The data are published as Official Statistics in Development while [work continues](#) to support the transition to Official Statistics status for this publication.

We would like to hear your thoughts and comments on this dashboard so we can ensure these statistics meet their needs. A [survey](#) is available to collect feedback.

Recruitment Activity Report

The Recruitment Activity dashboard is a development project using Jobtrain data to get a wider picture of recruitment across NHS Scotland. It contains information on how many adverts were published in 2-week rolling periods across the 2025/26 financial year, and the whole time equivalent being recruited. It covers all job families and NHS boards.

This Recruitment Activity reporting is in addition to our existing vacancy reporting in the NHS Scotland Official Workforce Statistics dashboard. It will not replace the current vacancy reporting process.

The first edition of the Recruitment Activity dashboard was published as management information on 8th September 2026. The decision to publish as management information was made due to concerns about known limitations and data quality anomalies within the Jobtrain data. Once feedback and discussion on this edition have concluded, we will develop a plan for further improvements and aim to publish future iterations as Official Statistics in Development.

We are interested to hear feedback about the value and usefulness of the report from wider audiences. If you'd like access to the dashboard for review, it can be done by logging into your Turas account and submitting an access request by following this link: [NHSScotland recruitment activity management information | Turas Data Intelligence](#). Please provide a reason for requesting access. We anticipate access would be appropriate for local and national NHS workforce planners who require access to these data to support service planning, workforce modelling, performance monitoring, and policy development.

Workforce Planning Tool

The Workforce Planning Tool was updated on 13 October 2026 with the latest observed data at 30 September 2025. The Tool uses data, statistical methods and local knowledge to forecast the future workforce supply; quantify the workforce demand and estimate the workforce gap between demand and workforce.

To aid with the user of the Tool, we have created a number of guides which are available on TDI. This includes explaining the scope of the Tool and details on the data sources, methodologies and modelling assumptions.

The Tool is available as Management Information on TDI. If you'd like access to the dashboard for review, it can be done by logging into your Turas account and submitting an access request by following this link: [Workforce planning tool | Turas Data Intelligence](#). Please provide a reason for requesting access. We anticipate access would be appropriate for local and national NHS workforce planners who require access to these data to support service planning, workforce modelling, performance monitoring, and policy development.

TDI and Dashboard User Engagement

As previously announced, we are working with our User Experience and Design colleagues and using the results of our user survey to better understand how we can improve the user experience of both TDI and our dashboards.

Our aim is to establish user groups to help us test and refine future developments. However, we are not yet in a position to begin this work.

In the meantime, if you have any questions or feedback regarding TDI or our publication outputs, please get in touch with the [Data Group](#) directly.

Further Information

Official Statistics

Following an [assessment by the Office for Statistics Regulation](#) of statistics about the NHS workforce in Scotland, the Director General of the Office for Statistics Regulation [wrote to](#) the Chief Executive of Public Services Delivery Scotland confirming that these statistics comply the standards of Trustworthiness, Quality and Value in the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#) and should be labelled as accredited official statistics.

Handy links to further information on TDI:

- The latest Official Statistics can be found here: [Official Statistics on the workforce of NHS Scotland](#).
- Some PSD Scotland publications are accompanied by a technical document and a data quality report. The technical document describes the data sources and the methodologies used within that publication. The data quality report provides information on data quality issues, as well as updates to coding. Updated versions of both documents are released with each publication. You can view the current and previous versions of both [on TDI](#).
- A [publication timetable](#) provides the release date for each publication up to a year in advance.
- Future [development plans](#) explains what we are working on.
- Our [policies and strategies](#) explain how we assess risks when releasing information, manage corrections and revisions to published statistics, and engage with users over the next three years.

Public Services Delivery Scotland

From 1st April 2026, NHS Education for Scotland (NES) and NHS National Services Scotland (NSS) have been joined together to create a new organisation called [Public Services Delivery Scotland](#) (PSD Scotland). PSD Scotland will lead on workforce planning and development, service infrastructure and innovation, with a particular focus on digital transformation. It will accelerate national programmes, alongside continued delivery of all existing NES and NSS services.

PSD Scotland will continue to produce the official statistics on the NHS Scotland workforce.

Other links to content on TDI

There is [guidance available](#) on how to navigate our reports and dashboards, including how to use the filters or export data.

A [catalogue](#) is available describing some of the reports available on TDI.