

NHS Scotland workforce statistics newsletter – 31 July 2026

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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. We will also share updates on other TDI reports, along with helpful links to make navigating the website easier.

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.

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.

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 how staff are coded. Updated versions of both documents is released with each publication. You can view the current and previous versions of both [on TDI](#).

Our newly published [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.

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 October.

NHS Scotland workforce

Latest publication news

The latest publication was released on 2 June on [Turas Data Intelligence](#). In addition to the quarterly update to employment and vacancies statistics, this publication provided an annual update for statistics on sickness absence, turnover, equality and diversity, bank and agency expenditure for nursing and midwifery and mental and dental staff. A new chart showing the age profile of the workforce has been added to the equality and diversity section of the dashboard.

Workforce statistics for General Practitioners and Dentists working in primary care were also updated. For the first time, the number of General Practitioners per 100,000 population and the number of General Practitioners by Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) and Rural Urban classification were included.

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

The next publication will be released on 1 September 2026 (based on the 30 June 2026 census). There will be updates to NHS Scotland employment and vacancies. For the first time we will include the following statistics: mean whole time equivalent of employment and the employment per 10,000 population. A new tab will show the distribution of the workforce by NHS Board.

The medical expenditure on agency locums is published annually in June. This figure represents the combined expenditure for resident doctors and senior doctors (Consultants and Staff and Associate Specialist grades). In September, we will publish a breakdown of expenditure for resident doctors and senior doctors for the year ending 31 March 2026.

Psychology and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) workforce

The latest NHS Scotland Psychology Services Workforce publication and NHS Scotland CAMHS workforce publication were released on 2 June.

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 September 2026 (based on the 30 June 2026 census). This publication will include updates to the employment, vacancy and training data.

General Practice Workforce survey

The annual GP Workforce survey is scheduled for publication on the 15 September. It will contain updated information on the headcount and whole time equivalent of General Practice staff, vacancies, absence and locum use.

As part of the [investment in General Practice](#), GP practices were required to complete the survey. Therefore, we expect a completion rate to increase to 100% compared with 75% last year. As part of quality assurance processes we compare the survey results with [GP headcount data](#). Statistical methods may be applied to the survey data to take into account any significant differences between the two data sets.

Medical specialty training and transition to the GP workforce

On 30 June 2026, PSD Scotland published statistics on Medical specialty training and transition to the GP workforce.

This was the second release of these Official Statistics in Development (OSID). The publication includes 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.

The June release included Training Region and Health Board breakdowns of the GP training and employment data. We have also made several presentational improvements to the dashboard in response to feedback. Our development plan is available on TDI.

Users can provide feedback by completing a short form or getting in touch with the Data Group directly.

The next release will be in December 2026.

Mental Health Workforce

PSD Scotland has [released](#) new statistics about the NHS Scotland mental health workforce on Turas Data Intelligence.

These statistics are Official Statistics in Development. This the first release of these statistics, using a new methodology for identifying NHS Scotland staff employed by NHS Scotland specifically to work in mental health services across all age groups, specialisms and settings. The accompanying technical document outlines the data sources, methods, known limitations of the new method and notes about data quality to help you interpret the new statistics.

We welcome your feedback to help us continue to develop these statistics: what is helpful, does anything not seem right, and what else would be useful? You can email us directly or share your feedback anonymously through this [short survey](#).

Please share with any colleagues who may be interested, and please [let us know](#) if you have any questions about these statistics.

Clinical Nurse Specialist workforce

In June we [published](#) new statistics on the Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS) workforce in NHS Scotland.

The data are published for the first time since 2018 and are published as Official Statistics in Development. The published dashboard provides a point-in-time analysis of the CNS workforce employed on 31 March 2026. 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

As mentioned in [our last newsletter](#), we plan on publishing a Recruitment Activity report later this summer. It will contain a 2-week average of the number of posts advertised by job family and health board. It will include job families that are not currently covered by our vacancy reporting.

This publication will be released as Official Statistics in Development. It will not replace our current vacancy data collections and reporting.

Currently, recruitment leads in each health board are reviewing their board's data. This quality assurance process will bring to light the strengths and limitations of using this new data source (Jobtrain). It also supports the value of these new statistics in how well they measure the true local picture for each board.

We'd like to extend our thanks to colleagues in the boards who are giving their time to support this review. If you'd like to know more or have any questions or comments, please let us know by emailing datagroup@nes.scot.nhs.uk.

Identifying occupations in NHS Scotland

A challenge when reporting on workforce data is that some jobs are not coded with enough detail to support workforce planning. We report statistics based on the Job Family framework, and this is detailed enough to report an occupation like Mental health nursing accurately. However, there are over 20,000 NHS Scotland staff coded in the Central functions sub job family with no further structured information on what occupations these staff are doing. It is also difficult to understand the full labour market for occupations that are common to the NHS and the wider economy, such as digital roles, when there are no common standards for coding them.

PSD Scotland is working on a number of approaches to this occupational coding problem.

A census can provide a snapshot of the workforce based on coding frameworks that are not available in our administrative data. Successful censuses were conducted for Clinical Nurse Specialists in 2023 and 2024, which resulted in new codes being adopted in the eESS HR system and a resumption of [published statistics](#) on this workforce. A similar census was carried out in 2025 for the Public Health workforce.

A census is currently underway for the digital workforce using the [Digital, Data and Technology profession framework \(DDaT\)](#). Using pilot data, we have been able to compare average hours and earnings in the NHS and the wider economy by mapping DDaT roles to the [Standard Occupational Classifications](#) used in the ONS's Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings.

Building on the outputs of expert working groups, we are also supporting proposals for direct changes to the Job Family coding in eESS for professional groups such as Pharmacy.

Machine learning techniques offer another way to improve the incomplete or inconsistent coding found in HR records – see the item on *Machine Learning for Pharmacy Role Prediction*.

Machine learning for pharmacy role prediction

The Machine Learning for Pharmacy Role Prediction project continues to support improvements in pharmacy workforce data used by the National Pharmacy Strategic Workforce Plan and the National Pharmacy Workforce Forum. The work focuses on strengthening the completeness and consistency of job-role information within eESS, which is essential for producing reliable workforce intelligence across NHS Scotland. To address gaps in existing data, the project has developed a machine-learning model capable of estimating missing job-role records across the pharmacy workforce. Initial modelling has achieved an accuracy rate of 97.6%, providing a robust foundation for future analytical development and demonstrating the potential value of advanced methods in workforce planning.

Further refinement of the dataset is currently underway to ensure outputs meet required quality standards before wider release. Once complete, the project is expected to deliver several benefits, including improved visibility of workforce composition, enhanced monitoring of supply trends over time, and strengthened evidence to support national and local workforce planning. In addition, the model is intended to support the development of forecasts, enabling earlier identification of emerging needs and contributing to more proactive planning across NHS Boards.

User engagement survey

Many thanks to everyone who completed the survey to understand how users currently use TDI and our Official Statistics dashboard. We are currently working on the next steps with our user experience expert and web developer, and will communicate the our findings on TDI when available.

Links to content on Turas Data Intelligence

Below are some links to content on TDI which our users might find helpful.

- The latest Official Statistics can be found here: [Official Statistics on the workforce of NHS Scotland](#).
- Detail of each [data source](#) used within the publications are provided.
- A [publication timetable](#) provides the release date for each publication up to a year in advance.
- A list of events that have [impacted data or reporting](#) is available.
- Future [development plans](#) explains what we are working on.
- There is [guidance available](#) on how to navigate our reports and dashboards, including how to use the filters or export data.