

SDR 166/2008

28 October 2008

NHS Beds, 2007-08

This release gives summary information, provided by the NHS, on bed use. Beds are classified by the specialty of the consultant who treated the patient: a list of specialty groups is given in the notes. The latest data relates to 2007-08 and comparisons are made with a decade earlier.

More detailed tables are available on request and in StatsWales tables at:
<http://www.statswales.wales.gov.uk/ReportFolders/ReportFolders.aspx>

Key facts:

Between 2006-07 and 2007-08:

- The total number of NHS beds ⁽¹⁾ fell by 229 (1.7 per cent) to 13,354.
- The number of beds in acute specialties fell by 303 (3.2 per cent) to 9,041.

Over the ten years from 1997-98 to 2007-08:

- The number of NHS beds in total fell by 1,840 (12 per cent).
- The number of beds in acute and geriatric specialties fell by 780 (7 per cent).
- Beds in the mental health sector fell by 948 (29 per cent) to 2,324.
- The percentage occupancy increased from 78.7 to 82.8 per cent.
- Annual throughput (number of patients treated per bed) increased from 34.3 to 38.6.
- The average duration of stay in acute specialties increased from 6.0 to 6.4 days.

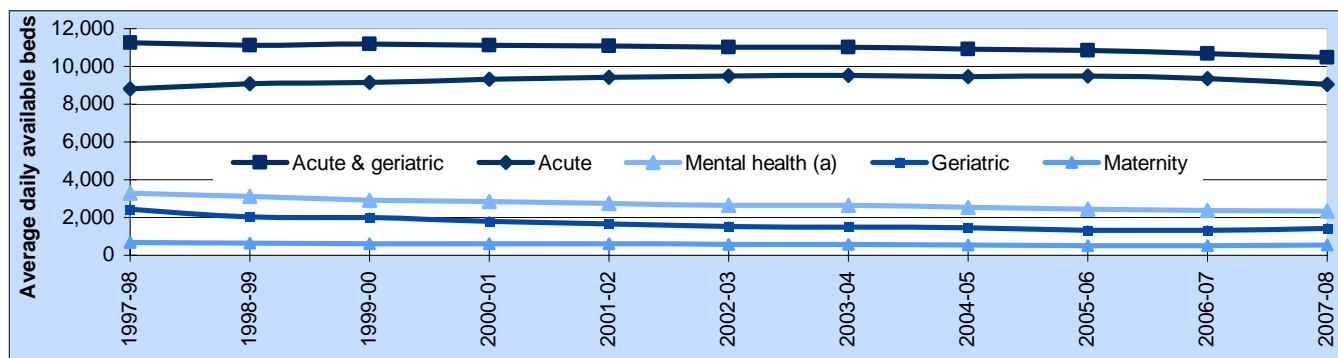
(1) Average daily available.

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Bed availability

Chart 1 NHS beds by sector: 1997-98 to 2007-08

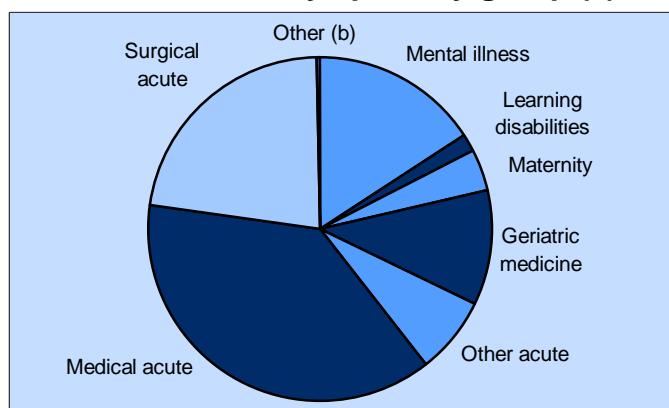


(a) Mental illness and learning disabilities

In the ten years since 1997-98 the total number of NHS beds has decreased by 1,840 (12 per cent) to 13,354. Most specialty groups showed a continuing decrease apart from the 'acute' group which increased in each year up to 2003-04. However, part of this increase was due to the re-classification of geriatric beds to the medical acute sector. Between 2005-06 and 2007-08 the 'acute sector' decreased by 467 (5 per cent). If acute and geriatric beds are taken together they have decreased by 780 (7 per cent) over the decade.

The number of beds in mental health have decreased by 948 (29 per cent) and maternity beds have decreased by 139 (21 per cent) since 1997-98.

Chart 2 NHS beds by specialty group (a)

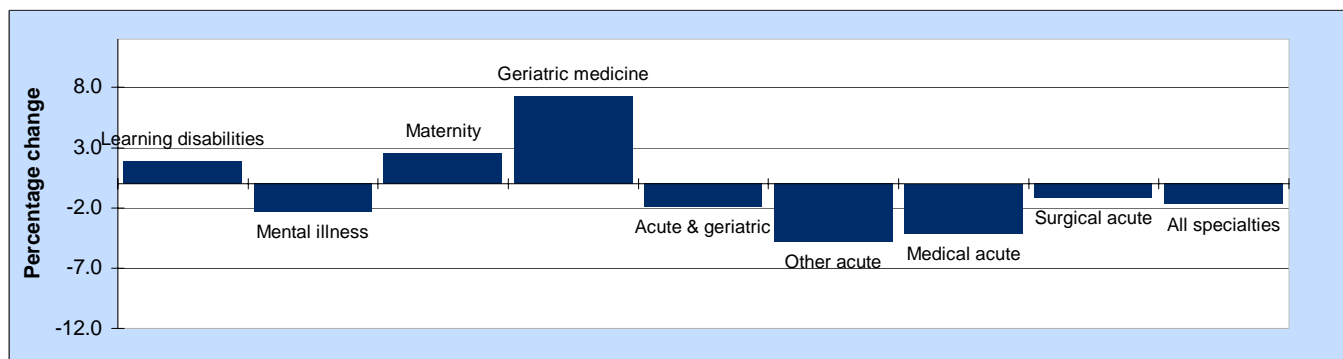


In 2007-08 there were 13,354 beds (average daily available) in NHS hospitals in Wales. The acute sector accounted for 68 per cent, mental illness for 16 per cent, geriatric medicine for 11 per cent, maternity for 4 per cent, and learning disabilities for 1 per cent.

(a) Average daily available beds.

(b) Pathology and community medicine.

Chart 3 Percentage change in number of beds 2006-07 to 2007-08 (a)



(a) Average daily available beds.

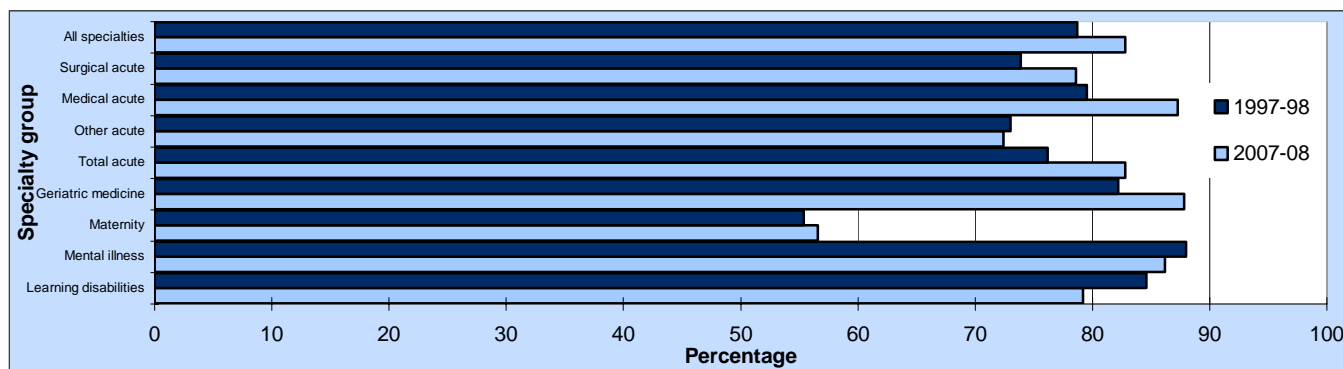
Overall between 2006-07 and 2007-08 the average number of available beds fell by 229 (1.7 per cent). All but three specialty groups showed a decrease. The increase was in:

Geriatric medicine - by 97 (7.3 per cent), Maternity - by 13 (2.6 per cent) and Learning Disabilities - by 4 (1.9 per cent)

The largest decrease, in terms of numbers, was in Medical Acute - by 217 (4.1 per cent).

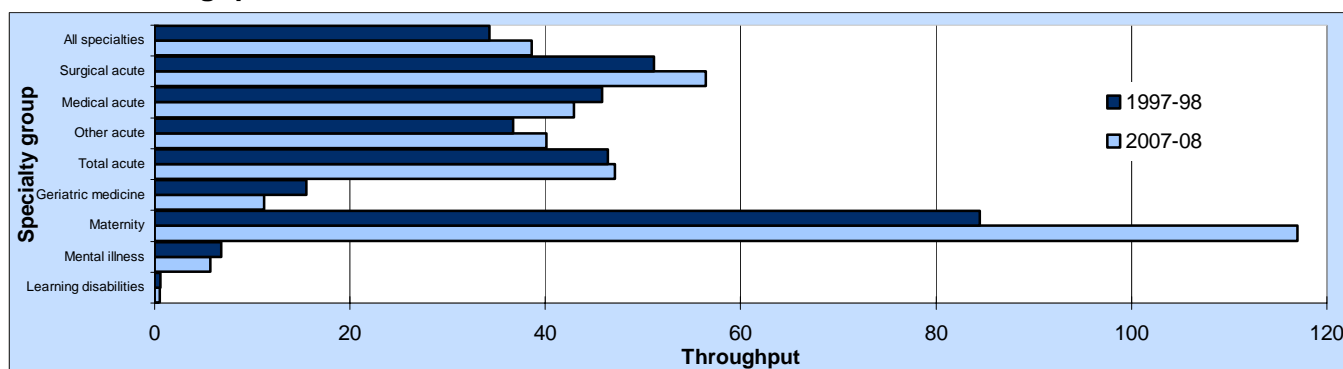
Bed utilisation in the decade 1997-98 to 2007-08

Chart 4 Percentage bed occupancy



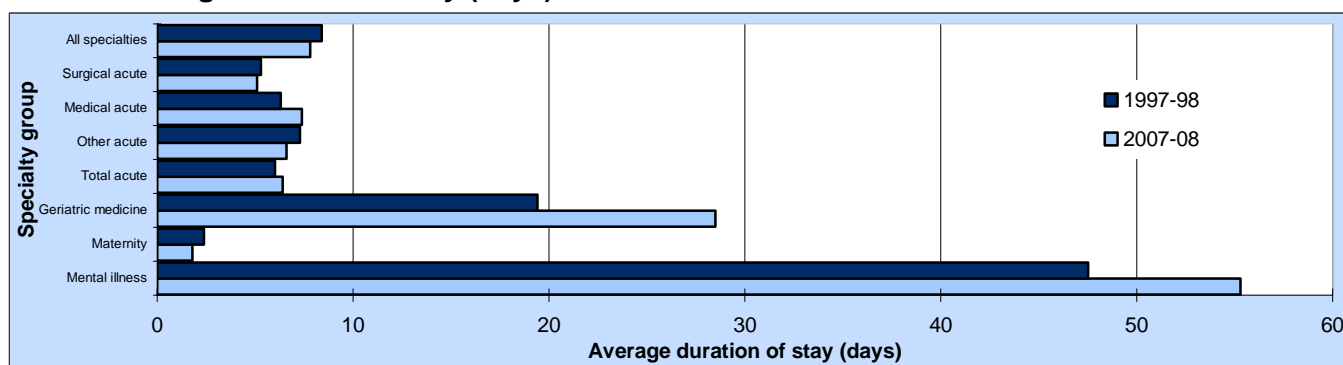
Between 1997-98 and 2007-08 percentage bed occupancy (average daily occupied beds, as a percentage of average available beds) for all specialties increased from 78.7 to 82.8. (4.1 percentage points). All but three of the seven groups showed an increase. The largest decrease was in 'Learning disabilities' - from 84.6 to 79.2 per cent (5.4 percentage points). The largest increase was in 'Medical acute' - from 79.5 to 87.3 (7.8 percentage points).

Chart 5 Throughput



Taking all specialties together the number of in-patient cases treated in the year per average daily available bed (throughput) increased between 1997-98 and 2007-08 from 34.3 to 38.6. Five of the seven groups showed an increase. The largest decrease was in 'Geriatric medicine' - from 15.5 to 11.2 per cent (4.3). The largest increase was in 'Maternity' - from 84.5 to 117.0 (32.5).

Chart 6 Average duration of stay (days)



In 2007-08 the longest average length of stay, 578 days, was for learning disabilities (not shown on graph) an increase from 530 in 1997-98. Taking all specialties together the average length of stay decreased from 8.4 to 7.8 between 1997-98 and 2007-08. Three of the seven groups showed a decrease. The largest decrease was in 'Other acute' - from 7.3 to 6.6 per cent (0.7). The largest increase was in 'Geriatric medicine' - from 19.4 to 28.5 (9.1).

Key Quality information

Source

The information contained in this Release is aggregated from the quarterly QS1 return. It collects information about beds and patient attendances by specialty from NHS hospitals in Wales. Data are collected from individual NHS Trusts and are subject to validation checks centrally prior to publication but it is the responsibility of these organisations to ensure that the figures have been compiled correctly in accordance with central definitions and guidelines.

Coverage

The data covers all beds, in-patients and out-patients in NHS hospitals in Wales. Welsh residents treated in England are excluded but non Welsh residents treated in NHS hospitals in Wales are included.

Notes

Average duration of stay

The average length of time in days each in-patient physically occupied a bed. For short-stay cases estimates are obtained by dividing the total of daily beds occupied over the year, by the number of in-patient cases in the year. However, for predominantly long-stay cases, e.g. learning disabilities, data obtained by this method of calculation should be used with caution.

Specialty

Each bed and patient attendance is classified by the specialty of the consultant responsible for the care of the patient. Specialties are aggregated to the following groups in this release:

Surgical acute:

General surgery
Urology
Traumatic and orthopaedic surgery
Ear, nose and throat
Ophthalmology
Oral surgery
Restorative dentistry
Paediatric dentistry
Orthodontics
Neurosurgery
Plastic surgery
Burns surgery
Cardiac surgery
Thoracic surgery
Paediatric cardiac surgery
Paediatric surgery
Accident and emergency
Anaesthetics
Pain management

Medical acute:

General medicine
Gastroenterology
Endocrinology
Haematology (clinical)
Clinical physiology
Clinical pharmacology
Audiological medicine
Clinical genetics
Rehabilitation
Palliative medicine
Paediatric cardiology
Cardiology
Dermatology
Thoracic medicine
Infectious diseases
Spinal injuries
Other neurology
Genito-urinary medicine
Nephrology
Medical oncology
Nuclear medicine
Rheumatology
Paediatrics
Paediatric neurology
Dental medicine

Other acute:

Gynaecology
GP other
Clinical oncology
Radiology

Maternity:

Obstetrics
GP maternity

Geriatric medicine

Mental illness:

Mental illness
Child and adolescent psychiatry
Forensic psychiatry
Psychotherapy
Old age psychiatry

Learning disabilities

Learning disabilities (Mental handicap)

Other

Pathology
Community medicine