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# General Medical Services for Northern Ireland: Annual Statistics 2022/23

**A National Statistics Publication**

**Published by:** BSO Family Practitioner Services Information Unit

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## Key Facts



- Northern Ireland had 317 active GP (General Practitioner) practices. This was a reduction of 2 compared to 2022 and a reduction of 33 (9.4%) since 2014.
- There were 1,448 GPs (excluding Locums). Of these, 60% were female and 40% were male, a notable shift in gender profile since 2014 (46% female, 54% male).
- A total of 2,041,000 individuals were registered with a GP practice. During 2022/23 there were approximately 54,000 new patient registrations and 39,000 patients transferred between NI GP practices.
- BSO processed £333m of payments towards overall cost of GP services in Northern Ireland. This was an average payment of £163 per registered patient.

# 1. GP Practice Statistics

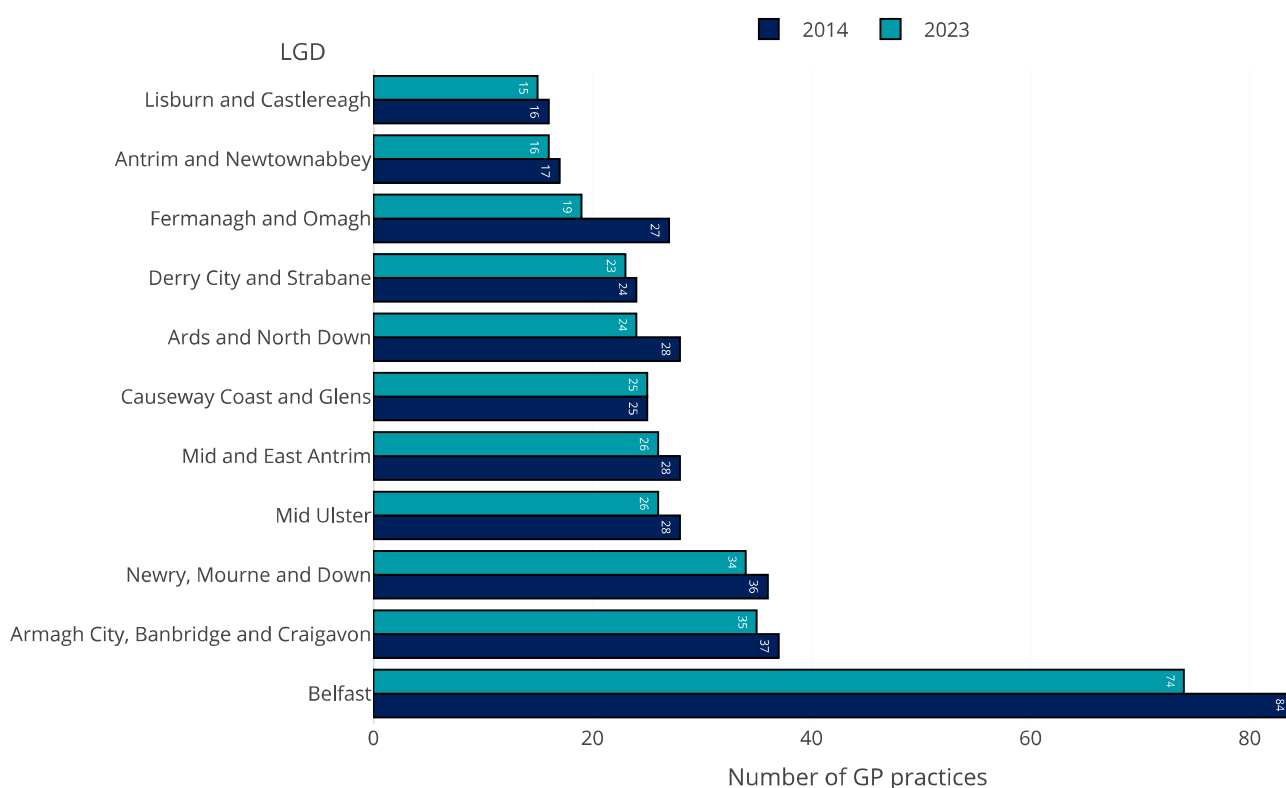
This section contains basic summary statistics on GP Practices including number of practices and their distribution geographically and proximity for patients. Where a practice is split over more than one site the location of the primary practice is used for analysis.

## 1.1 Number of GP practices

There were 317 GP practices in Northern Ireland on 31 March 2023. This is a reduction of 2 practices since 2022 and a reduction of 33 (9.4%) since 2014. The change in the number of practices is as a result of closures, as well as mergers (where practices have combined).

Belfast Local Government District (LGD) has the largest number of GP practices in 2023 (74) while Lisburn and Castlereagh LGD has the smallest number (15).

**Figure 1.1: Number of GP practices by Local Government District (LGD), 31st March 2014 and 31 March 2023**



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Only one LGD has maintained its number of GP Practices since 2014 (Causeway Coast and Glens). All others have shown a proportionate decrease ranging from 4.2% in Derry City and Strabane to 29.6% in Fermanagh and Omagh.

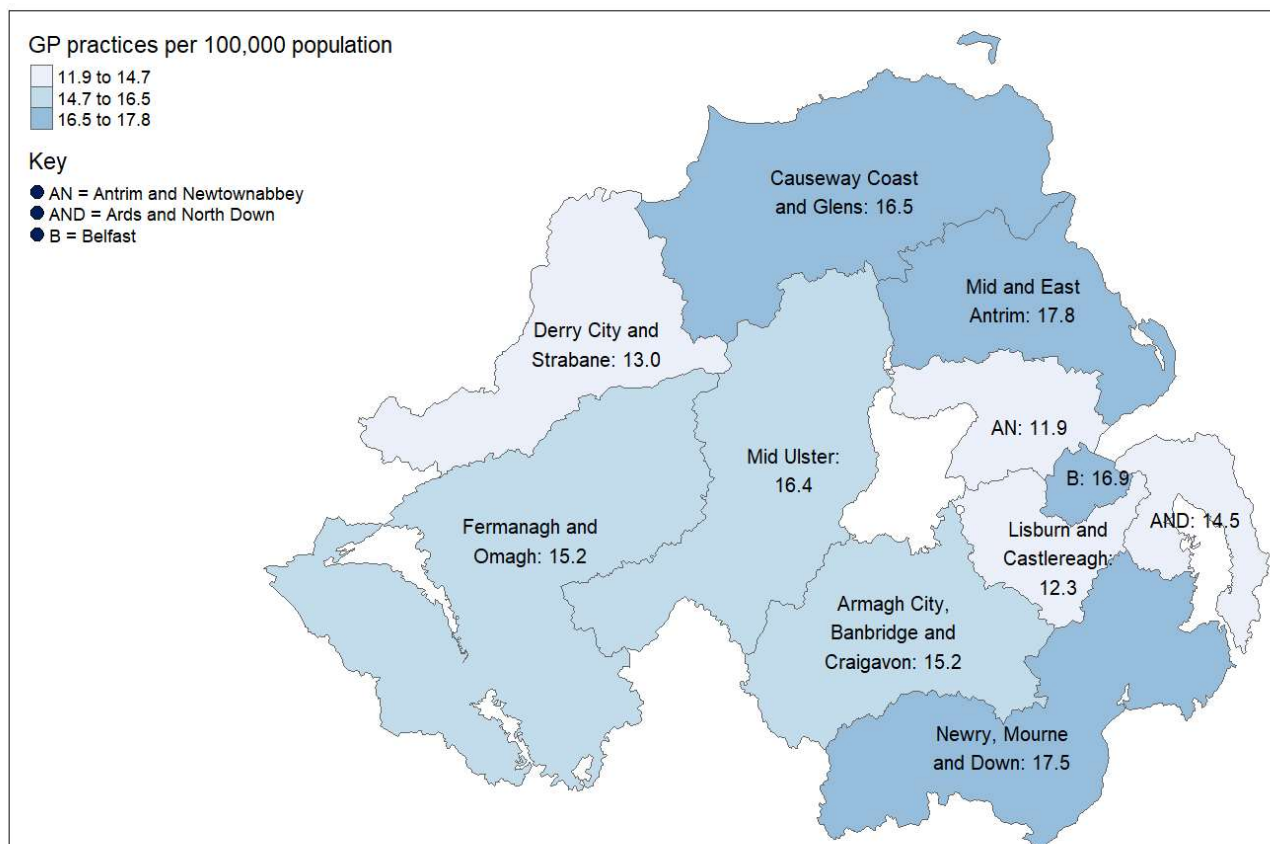
At Local Commissioning Group (Health Trust) level, Western had the largest proportionate decrease in GP practices between 2014 and 2023 (15.8%). The smallest decrease in GP practices during this period is in the Northern LCG (5.1%). For further information see [Annex Table 3.1](#)

## 1.2 GP practices per 100,000 population

Clearly the number of registered patients in any given LGD will have an influence on the service required. Figure 1.2 presents the number of GP practices per 100,000 registered patients in order to provide a better indication of service provision. Note, however, this does not take account of the different age profiles or levels

of morbidity across areas which will also impact on service requirements. It should also be noted that GP practices vary in size and number of live GP contracts associated with them.

**Figure 1.2: GP practices per 100,000 registered patients, by Local Government District (LGD), 31 March 2023**



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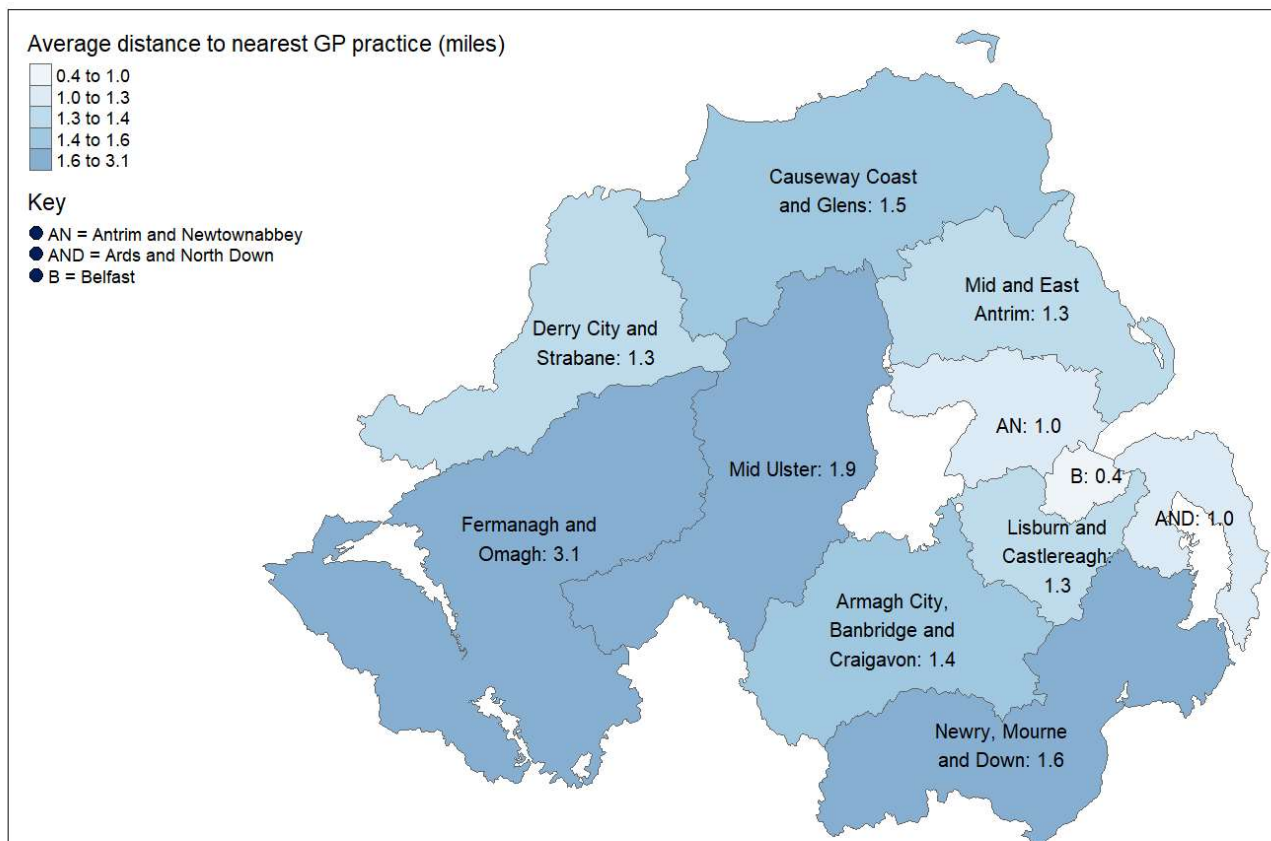
Mid and East Antrim LGD has the highest number of GP practices per 100,000 registered patients (17.8), almost one and a half times the number in Antrim and Newtownabbey LGD (11.9). However, when considering the number of GPs per 100,000 registered patients, Mid and East Antrim has 80.8 compared with 68.2 in Antrim and Newtownabbey meaning that, in general, GP practices in Antrim and Newtownabbey are larger and have more GPs operating out of them. For further information on the average number of GPs per practice and the number of GP practices per 100,000 see [Annex Tables 4.5 and 5.2](#)

At GP Federation level, Antrim Ballymena and North Belfast had the joint highest number of GP practices per 100,000 population (19.3), followed by East Belfast (18.3). The number of GP practices per 100,000 population has decreased across all GP Federations since 2017 with a reduction of 10.4% at Northern Ireland level during this time. This decrease across GP Federations ranges from 29.0% in Ards to 2.4% in Causeway. For further information see [Annex Table 5.3](#)

### 1.3 Distance to nearest GP practice

At Northern Ireland level, 97.6% of the population [[note 1](#)] live within five miles of a GP practice. At least 88% of the population live within a three mile radius of a GP practice; with the more urban LGDs (Belfast, Antrim and Newtownabbey, Lisburn and Castlereagh and Ards and North Down) showing upwards of 92%.

**Figure 1.3: Average distance to nearest GP practice by Local Government District (LGD), 31 March 2023**



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GP registration data were analysed using Northern Ireland multiple deprivation measure (NIMDM) quintiles where 1 represents the most deprived areas and 5 represents the least deprived areas.

Figure 1.4 shows that patients from the most deprived (0.8 miles) and least deprived (0.9 miles) deprivation quintiles lived closest to a GP practice on average, while those in the middle quintile (1.8 miles) lived furthest away on average. These findings may be influenced by the often urban location of GP practices typically characterised by areas of high and low deprivation.

**Note 1:**

Population is defined as active GP registration person counts at postcode level at 31 March 2023. Distance is calculated as the straight line distance between the centroids of the population home postcode to the postcode of the nearest GP practice.

**Figure 1.4: Population weighted average distance to nearest GP practice, by deprivation quintile, 31 March 2023**

Multiple Deprivation Measure (MDM) 2017	Average distance to nearest GP practice (miles)
Quintile 1 Most Deprived	0.8
Quintile 2	1.5
Quintile 3	1.8
Quintile 4	1.5
Quintile 5 Least Deprived	0.9
<b>Northern Ireland</b>	<b>1.3</b>

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For average distances to nearest GP practice by Local Commissioning Group (Health Trust), Local Government District, and, deprivation quintile detail refer to [Annex Tables 7.1, 7.2 and 7.3](#)

## 2. GP Workforce

This section contains basic summary statistics on GP Practitioners (GP) (excluding Locums) including number, age and gender and patients per GP Practitioner. GP figures presented are headcount and do not reflect different working patterns individual GPs may operate.

### 2.1 GPs by gender and age profile

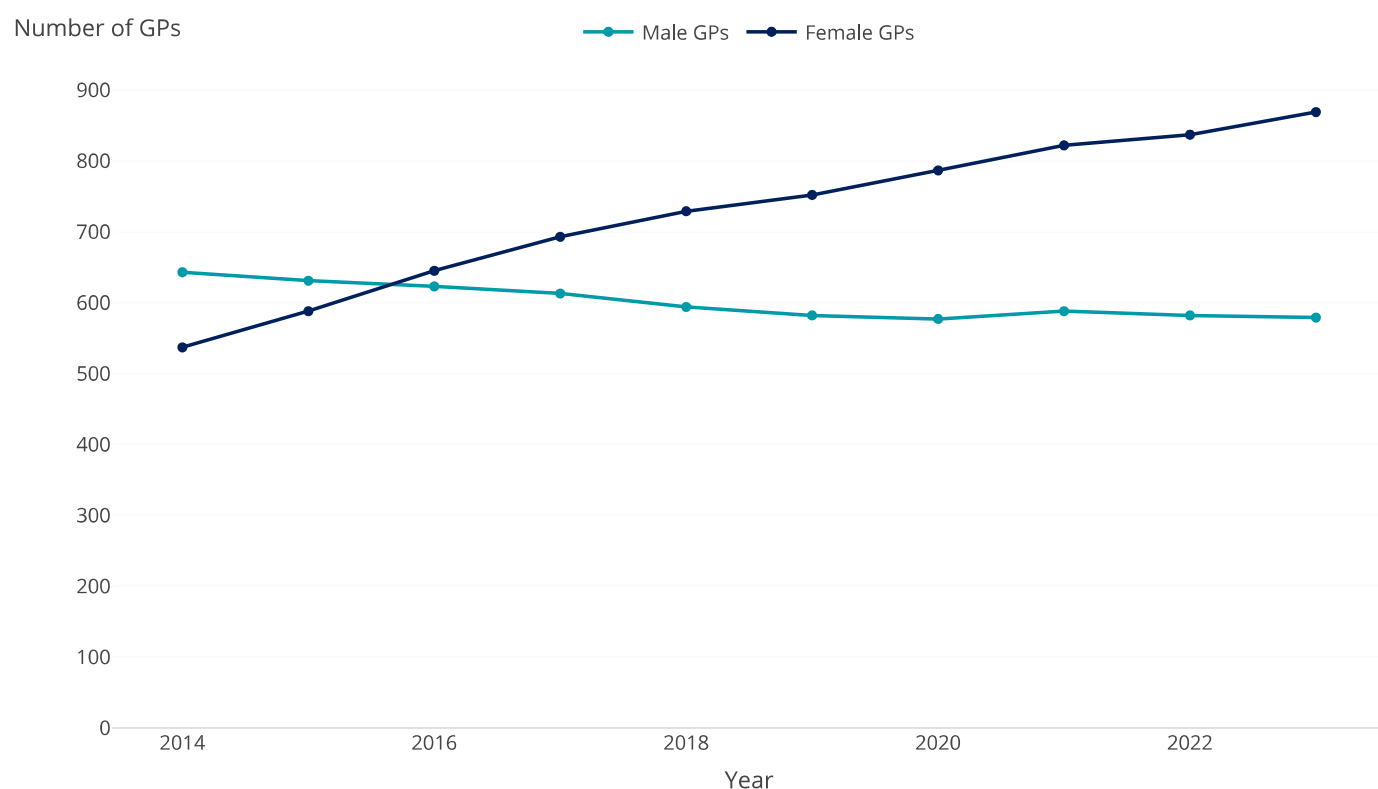
There were 1,448 active GPs (headcount) across Northern Ireland at 31 March 2023. This is a 2% increase in the number of GPs since 2022 and a 22.7% increase since 2014. It should be noted that not all GPs work full-time hours so changes in headcount may not reflect the change in full time equivalent GPs.

While quality-assured working patterns are currently unavailable for active GPs, unpublished management information, sourced from the Northern Ireland Medical and Dental Training Agency (NIMDTA), providing an analysis of GP appraisals up to the 2021/22 year (latest available) would tend to suggest that the almost 23% increase in headcount was not replicated in terms of whole-time equivalent (WTE) GPs. Instead, it reflects a fairly stable WTE position in respect of GP Partners and salaried GPs until 2018/19, followed by a reduction of more than 5% between 2018/19 and 2021/22. It is important to bear in mind, however, that this self-reported information is largely unvalidated - alternative methodologies may have been used to produce the analysis at different points in the series, a small proportion of GPs may not have undergone appraisal, the use of locums to provide GP sessions may not be fully captured and the pandemic itself may have impacted the propensity to report. That said, it does highlight the need for users to exercise caution when making comparisons, particularly across time, based purely on headcount figures alone.

In terms of gender profile of GPs, 60% are female and 40% are male. Figure 2.1 shows that since 2014 there has generally been a gradual downward trend in the number of male GPs with a steeper increase in the number of female GPs.

The number of male GPs is 10% lower than in 2014, while the number of female GPs has increased by more than half (61.8%) during the same period.

**Figure 2.1: Number of GPs in NI by gender, 2014 to 2023**



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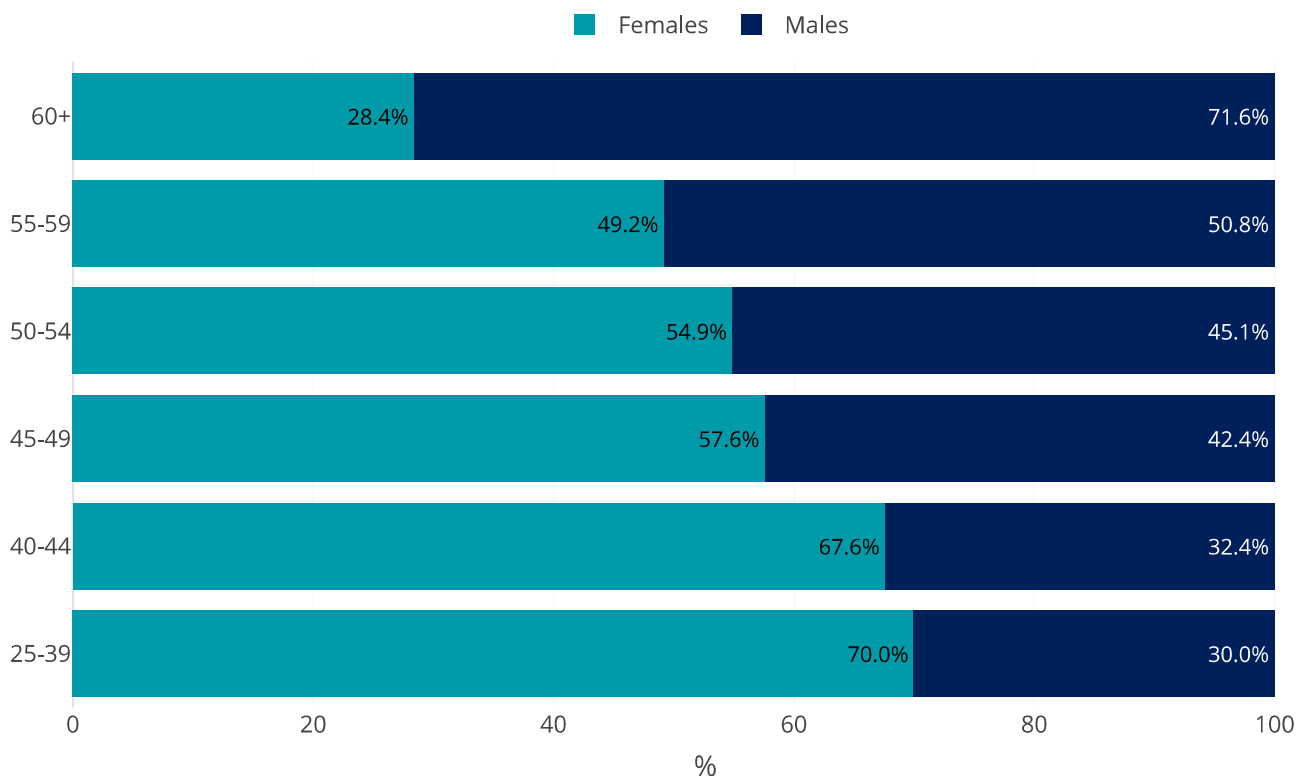
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The changing demographics of the GP workforce are reflected in Figure 2.2. Over half of GPs in the 55-59 and 60+ age-groups are male, while there are more female GPs in the younger age groups.

The 25-39 age band is made up of 30.0% male and 70.0% female GPs. As age increases, so does the percentage of male GPs until the oldest age bracket (60+) where the figures are more than reversed at 71.6% male and 28.4% female.

Almost two fifths of female GPs (37.6%) are in the 25-39 age band compared to just under a quarter of male GPs (24.2%). Conversely only 3.8% of female GPs are aged 60 and over compared to 14.3% of male GPs.

**Figure 2.2: GPs in Northern Ireland by age and gender, 31 March 2023**



Download data:

[Figure 2.2.CSV \(1kB\)](#)    [Figure 2.2.XLSX \(7kB\)](#)

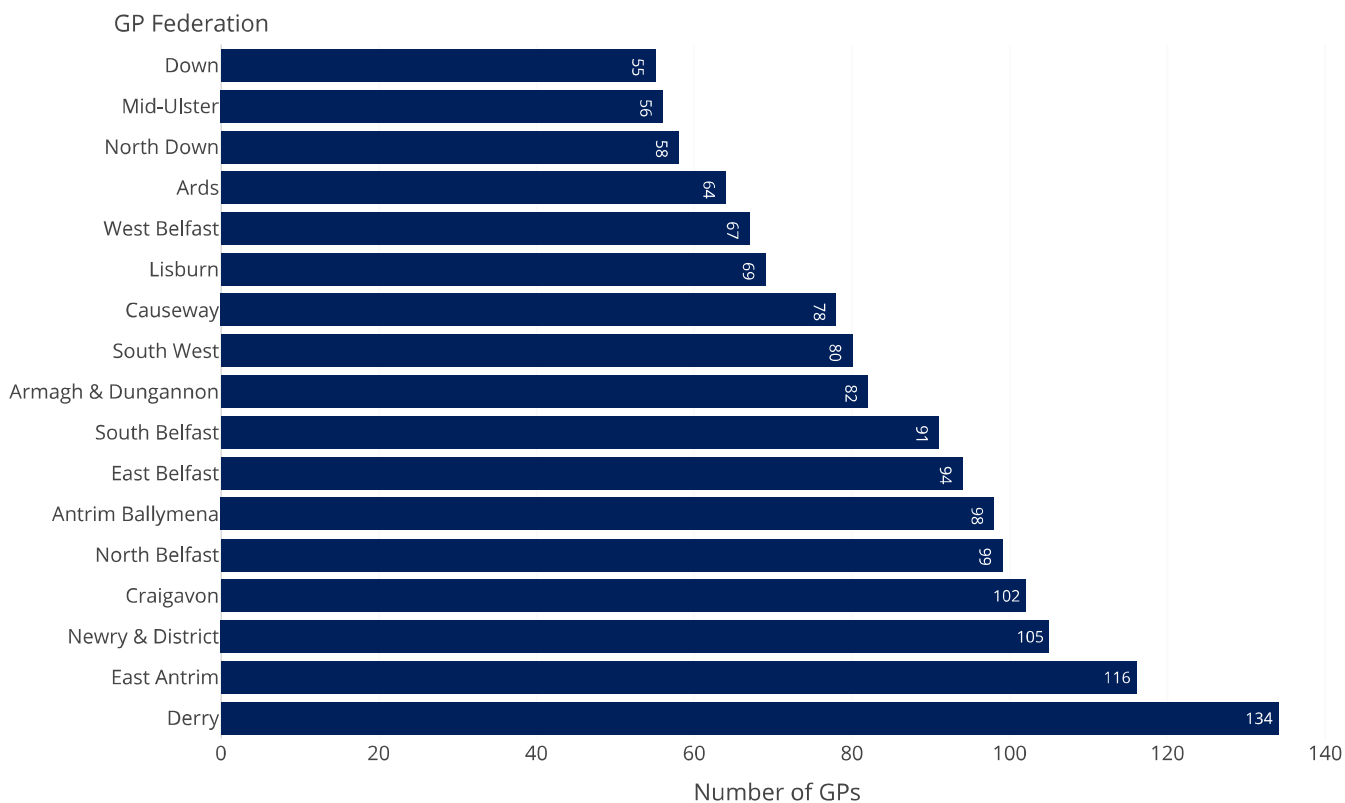
The average age of Northern Ireland GPs is 45 years old. At GP Federation level, average age ranges from 42 years old in Craigavon to 49 years old in South West.

The GP Federation with the highest proportion of GPs aged 55 and over is South West where just over one third (34.2%) of GPs are in this age group. West Belfast has the next highest proportion of GPs aged 55 and over (31.8%) followed by Antrim Ballymena (26.5%).

Ards, Craigavon, East Antrim, East Belfast, Lisburn, Mid-Ulster, Newry & District and North Down GP Federations have a lower proportion of GPs aged 55 and over than the Northern Ireland average of 20.9%.

**Figure 2.3: Number of GPs in Northern Ireland, by GP Federation, 31 March 2023**

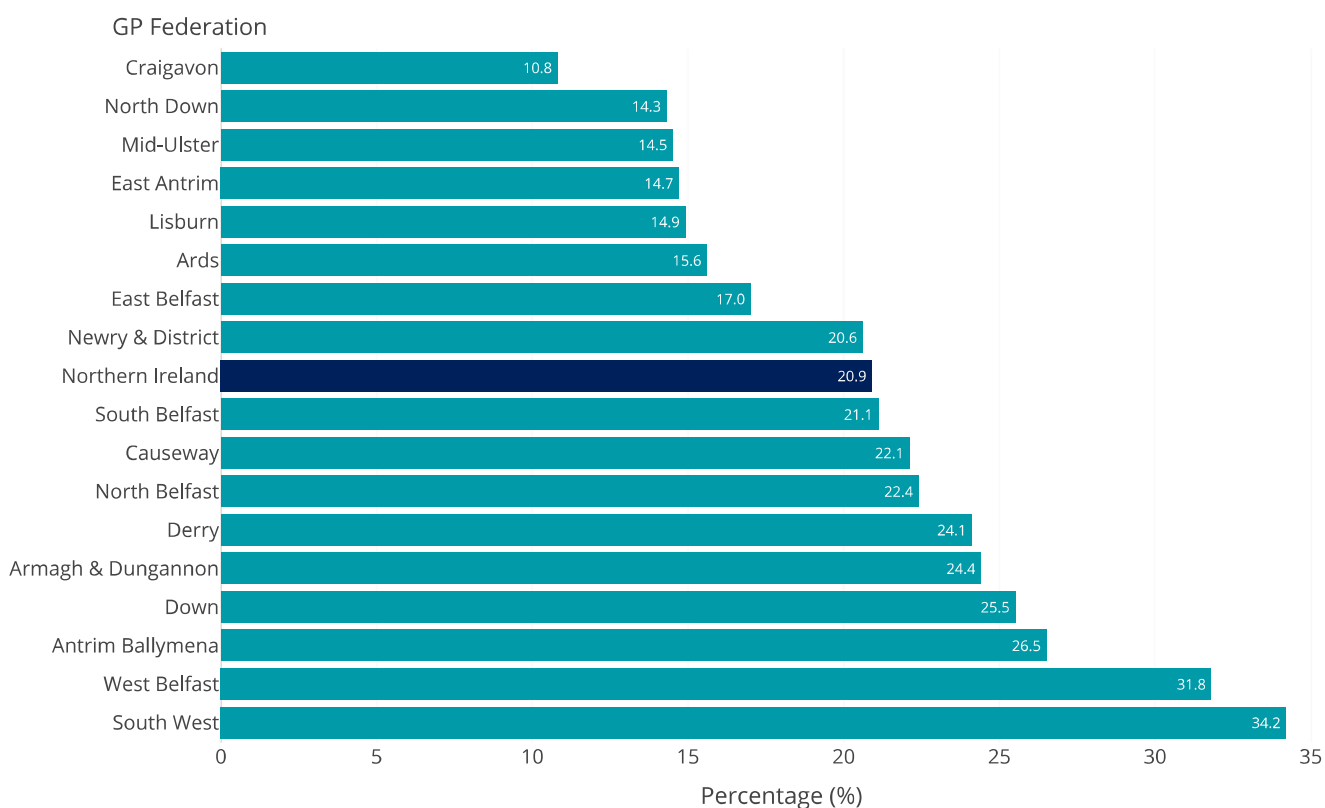




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**Figure 2.4: Percentage of GPs over 55 in Northern Ireland, by GP Federation, 31 March 2023**



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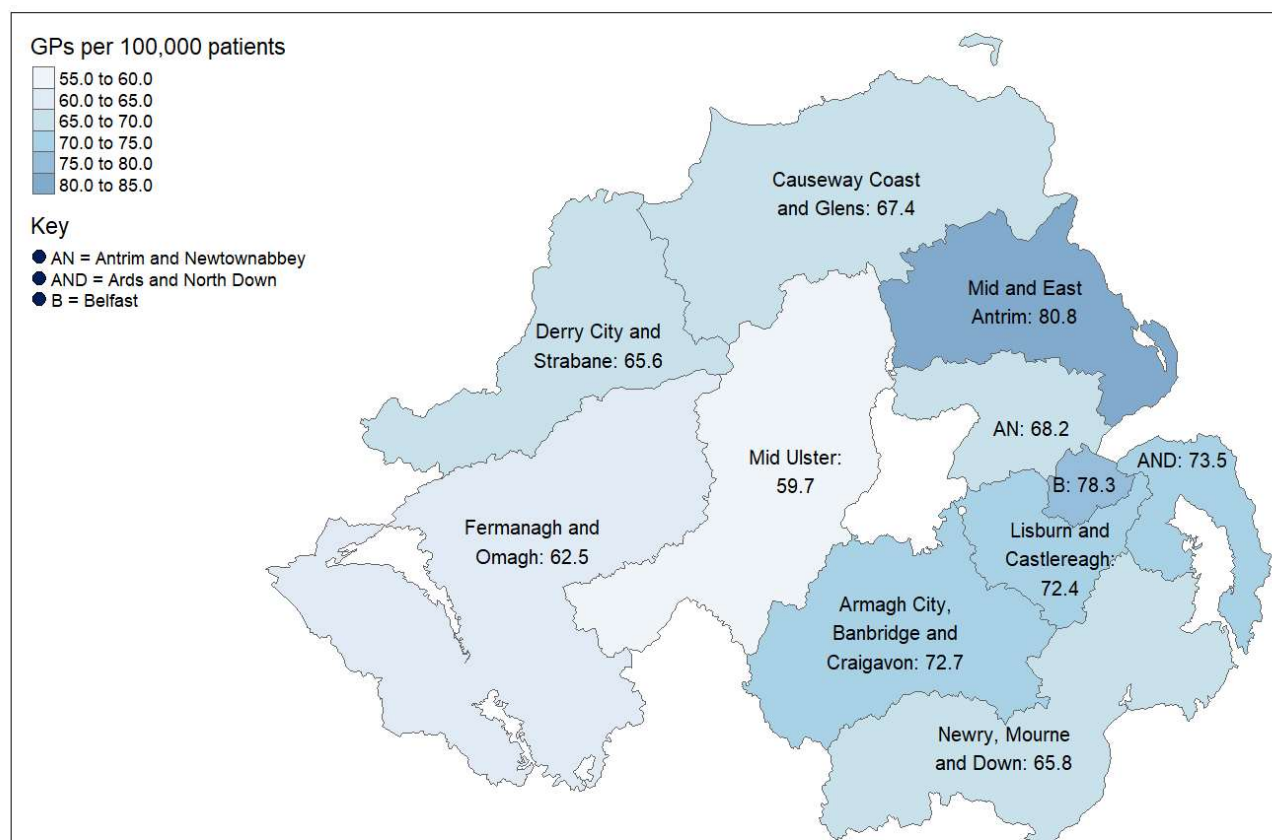
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## 2.2 GPs per head of population

Belfast LGD has the largest number of GPs (342) and registered patients [note 2] (436,933). Fermanagh and Omagh LGD has the smallest number of GPs (78) while Lisburn and Castlereagh LGD has the fewest registered patients (121,543). Figure 2.5 presents the number of GPs per 100,000 registered patients.

Mid and East Antrim LGD has the highest number of GPs per 100,000 registered patients (80.8), more than one third higher than the number in Mid Ulster LGD (59.7) which had the lowest. The Northern Ireland average is 70.9 GPs per 100,000 registered patients (or 1 GP for every 1,410 registered patients). Again, this analysis takes no account of varying levels of full and part-time working by GPs across areas which may, in part, help explain some of the differences.

**Figure 2.5 GPs per 100,000 registered patients, by Local Government District (LGD), 31 March 2023**



Download data:

[Figure 2.5.CSV \(1kB\)](#)

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### Note 2:

Patients may not necessarily reside in the same LGD as the GP practice to which they are registered.

### 3. Registered Patients

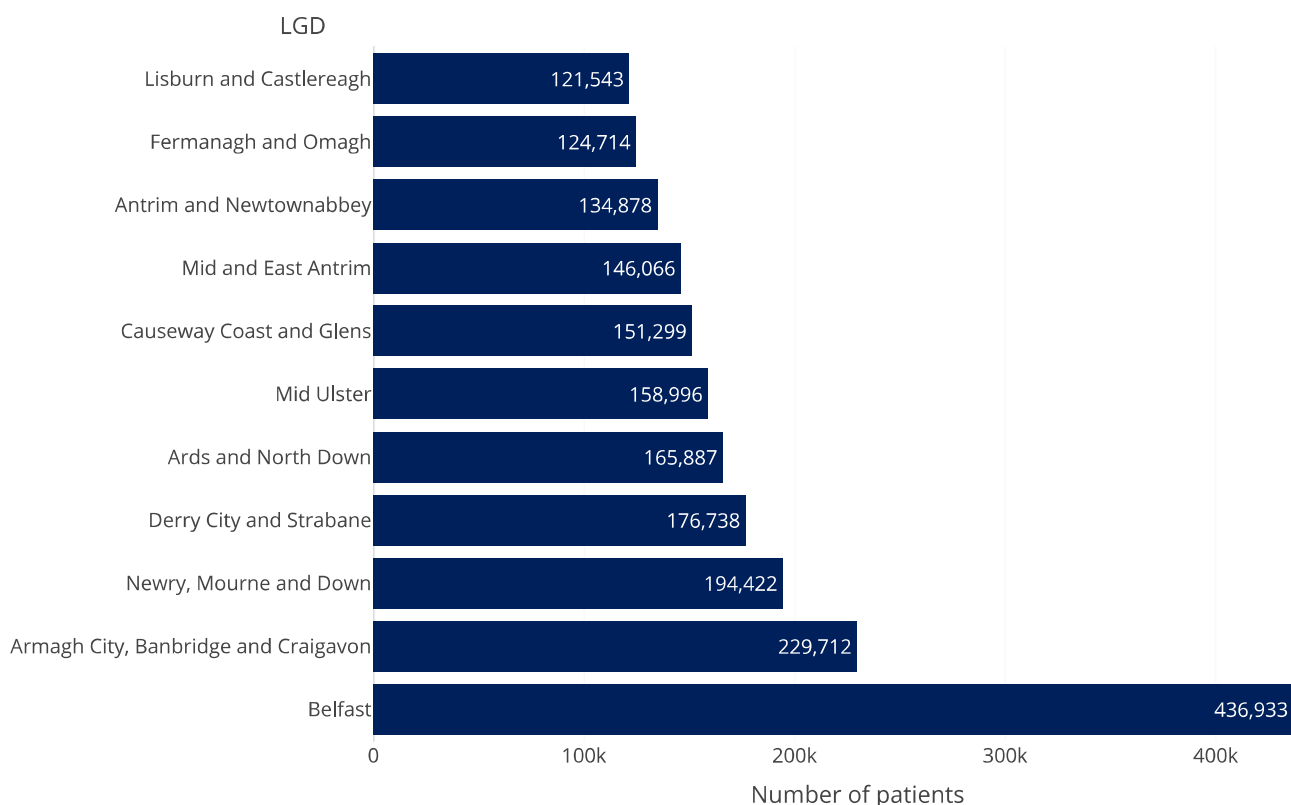
This section contains basic summary statistics on registered patients including new patient registrations during 2022/23.

#### 3.1 Total registered patients

There were a total of 2,041,188 individuals on the index of patients registered with a GP practice at 31 March 2023. [\[note 3\]](#)

At 31 March 2023, Belfast Local Government District [\[note 4\]](#) had the highest number of patients registered with GP practices within its boundary (436,933) and is over 90% higher than the next highest LGD (Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon: 229,712). Lisburn and Castlereagh had the smallest number of GP registered patients (121,543).

**Figure 3.1: Registered patients, by Local Government District (LGD), 31 March 2023**



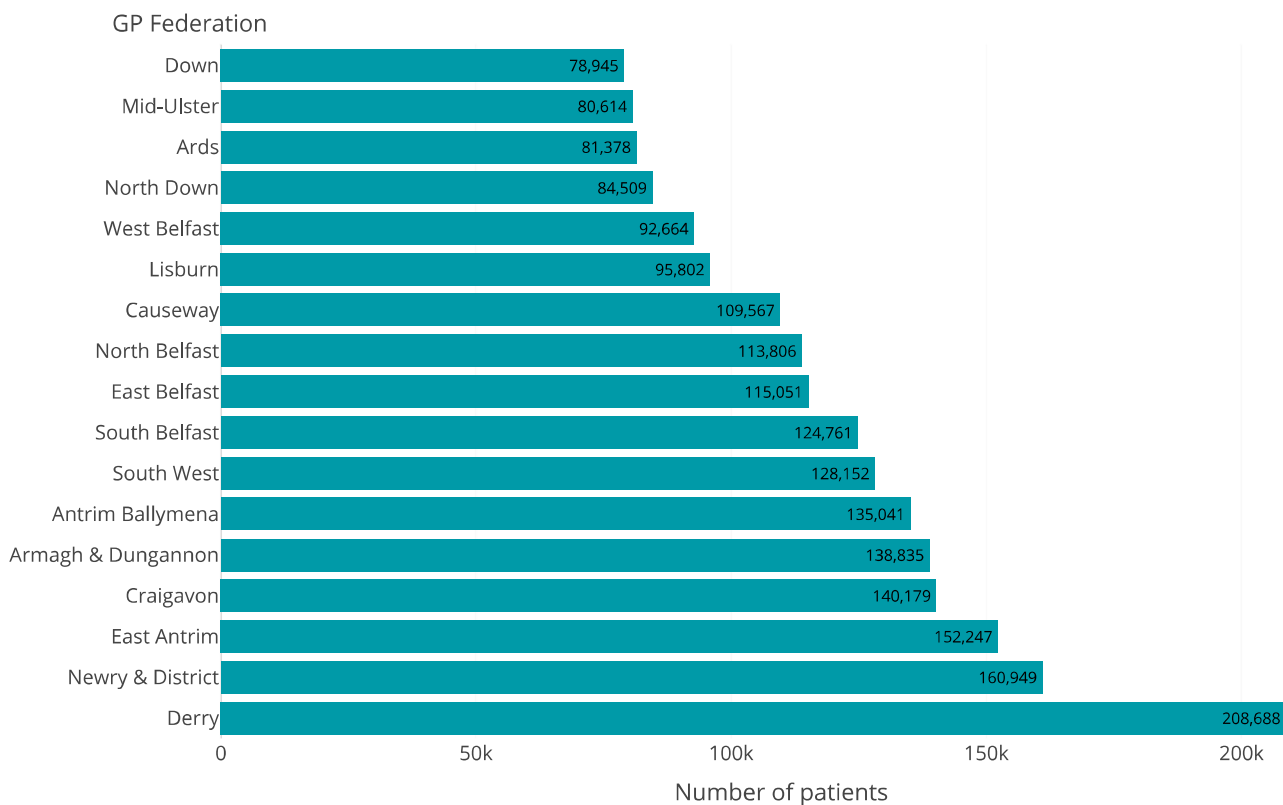
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At GP Federation level, Derry has, by a considerable margin, the highest number of registered patients (208,688), while Down (78,945), Mid-Ulster (80,614) and Ards (81,378) have the smallest numbers. All GP Federations have seen patient numbers grow by approximately 1% or less when compared to 2022, with the exception of South Belfast and Craigavon who have witnessed increases of 2.5% and 1.4% respectively. For further information see [Annex Table 1.3](#)

**Figure 3.2: Registered patients, by GP Federation, 31 March 2023**



Download data:

[Figure 3.2.CSV \(1kB\)](#)    [Figure 3.2.XLSX \(8kB\)](#)

**Note 3:**

There are differences between the figures for GP registered patients and the NI residential population. For more detail see [Data Quality Summary](#) in the Technical Notes section at the end of this report.

**Note 4:**

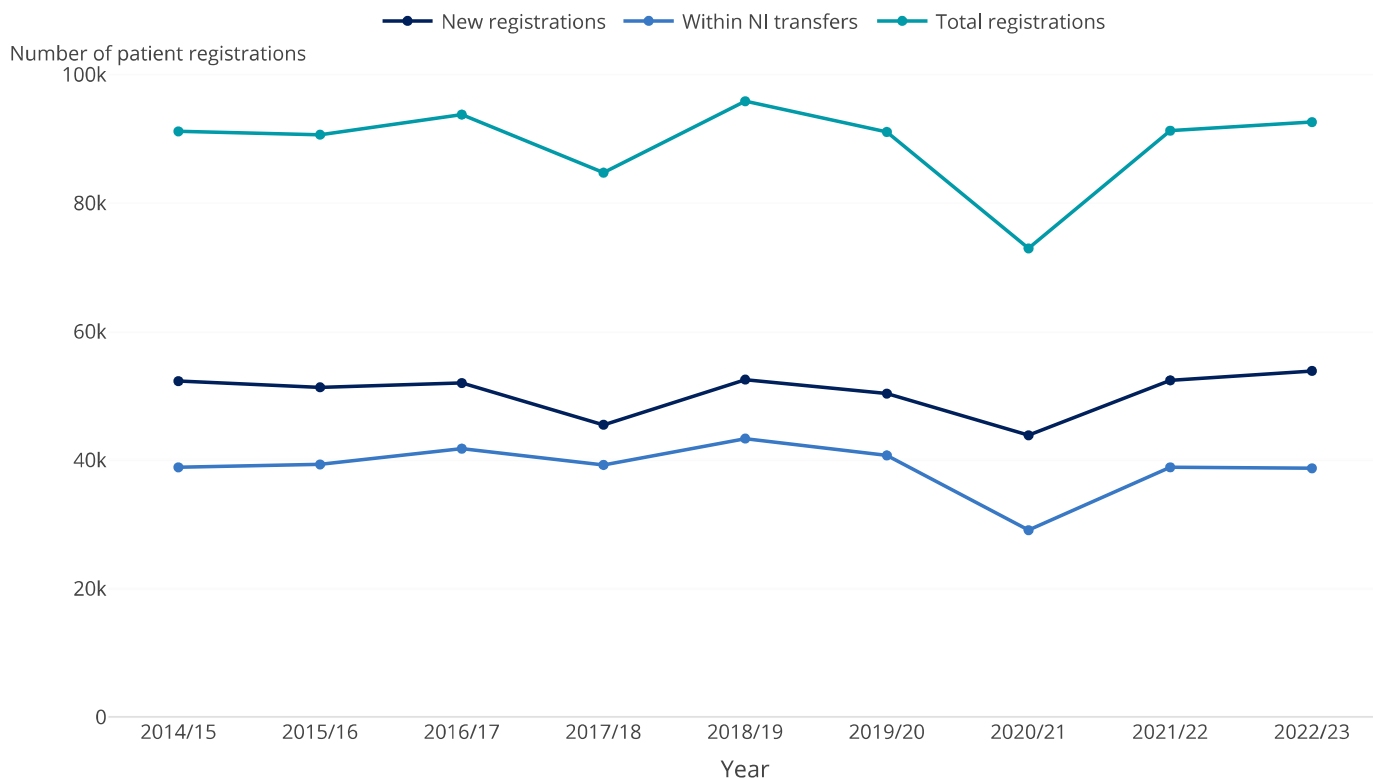
Patients may not necessarily reside in the same LGD as the GP practice to which they are registered.

### 3.2 Patients registering with a GP practice during 2022/23

During the 2022/23 financial year, GP practices in Northern Ireland registered 92,602 patients. This comprised 53,877 new patients (first time registrations in NI) and 38,725 patients transferring from another Northern Ireland GP practice.

Figure 3.2 shows the trend in registrations since 2015. The drop in registrations during 2017/2018 may be explained by the introduction of a new registration form. Issues with this new form resulted in a backlog building up in 2017/2018 that was relieved in 2018/2019 leading to the 2018/2019 figure being slightly higher than expected. A further significant drop can be observed during 2020/2021, in large part driven by the impact of Covid-19 on registration services and population movement, with activity returning to expected levels since.

**Figure 3.3: Total GP registrations (new and within Northern Ireland transfers), 2014/15 to 2022/23**



Download data:

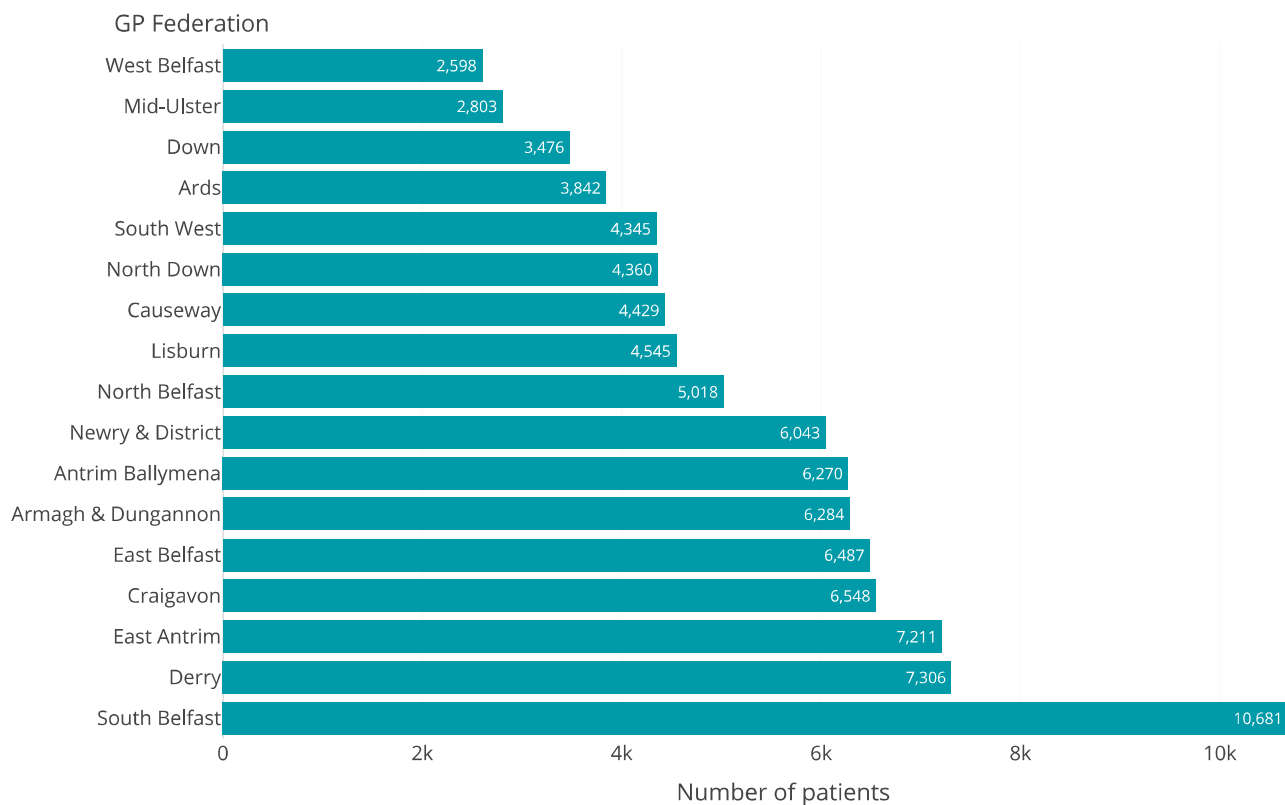
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Practices in the South Belfast GP Federation registered the largest number of patients (10,681) during 2022/23. This is despite South Belfast being only the 8th largest GP Federation in terms of patient numbers. However, this may in part be explained by registration of students who transferred to another GP Practice as a result of moving address, as the area served by this GP Federation contains a lot of student accommodation. Aside from South Belfast, the number of registrations in a GP Federation is broadly proportionate to the number of registered patients in that Federation.

Derry, the largest GP federation in terms of patient numbers, registered the second largest number of patients (7,306). Meanwhile West Belfast (2,598) and Mid-Ulster (2,803) registered the smallest number of patients during 2022/23. West Belfast is the fifth smallest GP Federation in terms of the number of registered patients, while Mid-Ulster is the second smallest.

**Figure 3.4: Total GP registrations (new and within Northern Ireland transfers), by GP Federation, 2022/23**



Download data:

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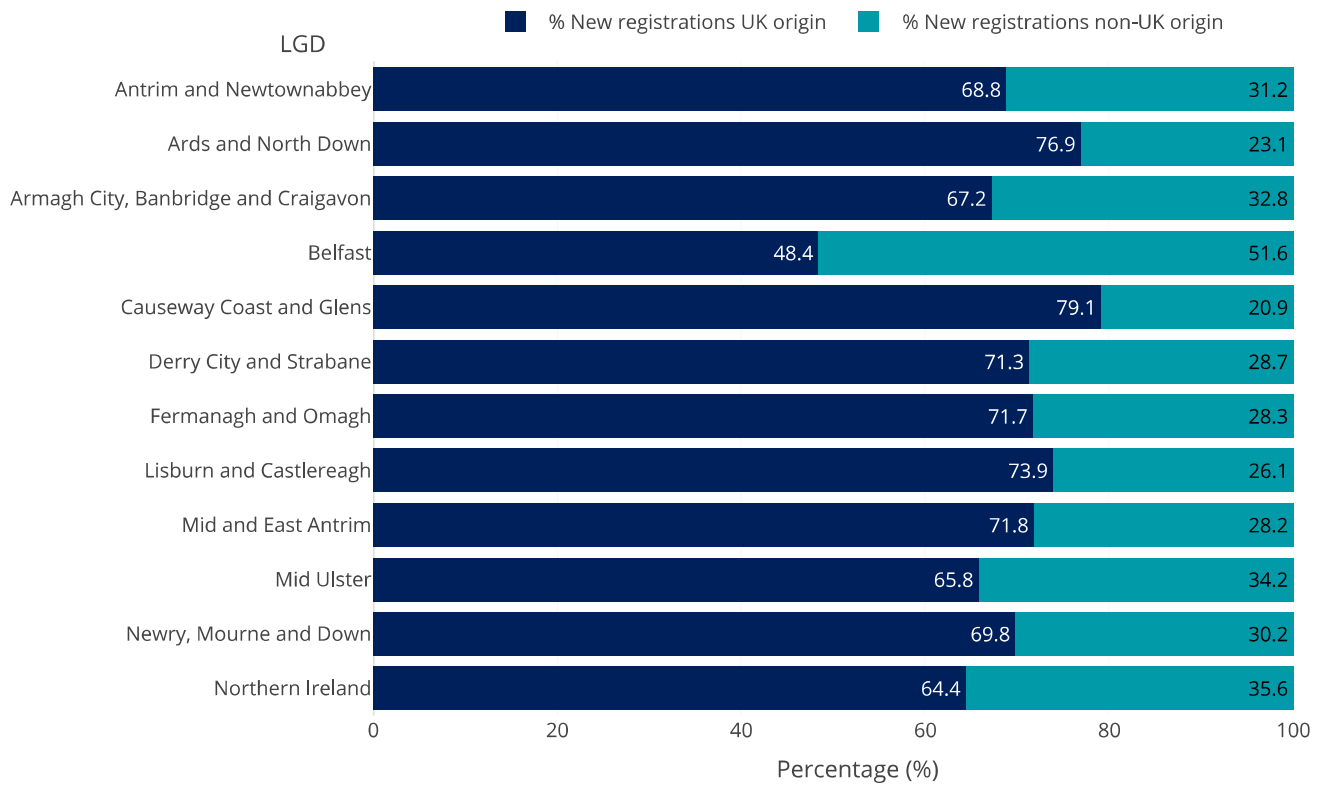
[Figure 3.4.XLSX \(8kB\)](#)

### 3.3 Non UK Nationals registering with a GP practice during 2022/23

At Northern Ireland level, more than one third (35.6%) of first time GP registrations during 2022/23 were non-UK Nationals, compared to 30.0% in during 2021/22. This figure had decreased in 2020/21 (22.2%), potentially due to impact of Covid-19, after remaining consistent at around 28% during both 2019/20 (28.4%) and 2018/19 (27.5%).

At Northern Ireland level, more than two fifths (43.0%) of all non-UK National first time registrations during 2022/23 were with a GP practice in Belfast LGD. At LGD level, the proportion of first time registrations attributable to non-UK Nationals ranged from 51.6% in Belfast to 20.9% in Causeway Coast and Glens.

**Figure 3.5: New (first time in NI) GP registrations by UK Nationals and non-UK Nationals, by Local Government District (LGD), 2022/23**



Download data:

[Figure 3.5.CSV \(1kB\)](#)

[Figure 3.5.XLSX \(8kB\)](#)

## 4. BSO Payments towards GP Services

This section contains basic summary statistics on payments processed by BSO towards the overall cost of GP services in Northern Ireland.

### 4.1 BSO payments by Local Commissioning Group (Health Trust)

During 2022/23, BSO processed £333m of payments towards the overall cost of GP services in Northern Ireland.

Figure 4.1 presents BSO payment towards GP services by Local Commissioning Group (Health Trust). At £78.4 million, GP practices located in the Northern Local Commissioning Group received the highest payment towards GP services. GP practices located in South Eastern received the lowest payment towards GP services (£53.6 million).

The average BSO payment towards GP services per registered patient for 2022/23 was £163, a decrease of £6 per patient since 2021/22. This decrease can be attributed to substantial payments made in relation to Covid-19 no longer occurring in 2022/23.

At Local Commissioning Group (Health Trust) level, the highest average payment towards GP services per registered patient was £176 in Western while the lowest was £157 in both Southern and South Eastern.

#### Figure 4.1: BSO payments towards GP services, by Local Commissioning Group (Health Trust) of GP practice in receipt of payment, 2022/23

Local Commissioning Group (Health Trust)	Payment towards GP services (£ millions)	Average payment per patient (£)
South Eastern	53.6	157
Western	59.3	176
Southern	68.0	157
Belfast	73.7	165
Northern	78.4	162
<b>Northern Ireland</b>	<b>333.0</b>	<b>163</b>

Download data:

[Figure 4.1.CSV \(1kB\)](#)   [Figure 4.1.XLSX \(8kB\)](#)

Factors that can influence variation in payment towards GP services per patient include age profile of patients, additional services available, level of deprivation, rent and rates variation, locum use, trial programs etc.

### 4.2 BSO payments by Local Government District

Figure 4.2 presents BSO payment towards GP services by Local Government District (LGD). GP practices located in the Belfast LGD, which comprises more than one fifth of Northern Ireland's registered patients, received the highest payment towards GP services (£71.9 million), more than twice the amount received by the next highest recipients (GP practices located in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon: £35.8m). At £17.8m, practices located in Lisburn and Castlereagh, the LGD with the smallest number of registered patients, received the lowest payment towards GP services.

In terms of payment per registered patient, the highest amount was £181 per registered patient in Derry City and Strabane while the lowest was £147 in Lisburn and Castlereagh. GP practices located in Derry City and Strabane saw the largest reduction in payment per patient from 2021/22 (-4.7%) while those in Armagh City,



Banbridge and Craigavon experienced the smallest reduction in payment per patient (-1.9%).

**Figure 4.2: BSO payments towards GP services, by Local Government District (LGD) of GP practice in receipt of payment, 2022/23**

Local Government District	Payment towards GP services (£ m)	Average payment per patient (£)
Lisburn and Castlereagh	17.8	147
Antrim and Newtownabbey	20.3	150
Fermanagh and Omagh	21.1	170
Mid and East Antrim	23.8	163
Mid Ulster	25.0	157
Ards and North Down	26.0	157
Causeway Coast and Glens	26.7	176
Derry City and Strabane	32.1	181
Newry, Mourne and Down	32.5	167
Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon	35.8	156
Belfast	71.9	165
<b>Northern Ireland</b>	<b>333.0</b>	<b>163</b>

Download data:

[Figure 4.2.CSV \(1kB\)](#)

[Figure 4.2.XLSX \(8kB\)](#)

### 4.3 BSO payments by GP Federation

Figure 4.3 presents BSO payment towards GP services by GP Federation. Given the Derry GP Federation has the largest number of registered patients, it is unsurprising that GP practices located here also recorded the highest total payment towards GP services (£37.5m). At £181, the West Belfast GP Federation recorded the highest average payment per registered patient during 2023, closely followed by Derry (£180). Down and Causeway (both £177) GP Federations also show average payments per registered patient close to £180.

GP practices located in the North Down (£12.5m) and Mid Ulster (£12.7m) GP Federations received the lowest total BSO payment towards GP services during 2023. Practices located in the Lisburn (£143) and Craigavon (£145) GP Federations, recorded the lowest average payment per registered patient during the financial year.

**Figure 4.3: BSO payments towards GP services, by GP Federation of GP practice in receipt of payment, 2022/23**

GP Federation	Payment towards GP services (£ m)	Average payment per patient (£)
North Down	12.5	148
Mid-Ulster	12.7	157
Ards	13.5	165
Lisburn	13.7	143

<b>GP Federation</b>	<b>Payment towards GP services (£ m)</b>	<b>Average payment per patient (£)</b>
Down	13.9	177
West Belfast	16.8	181
South Belfast	18.3	147
East Belfast	18.9	164
Causeway	19.4	177
North Belfast	19.6	173
Craigavon	20.3	145
South West	21.8	170
Antrim Ballymena	22.2	164
Armagh & Dungannon	22.4	161
East Antrim	23.1	151
Newry & District	26.4	164
Derry	37.5	180
<b>Northern Ireland</b>	<b>333.0</b>	<b>163</b>

Download data:

[Figure 4.3.CSV \(1kB\)](#)

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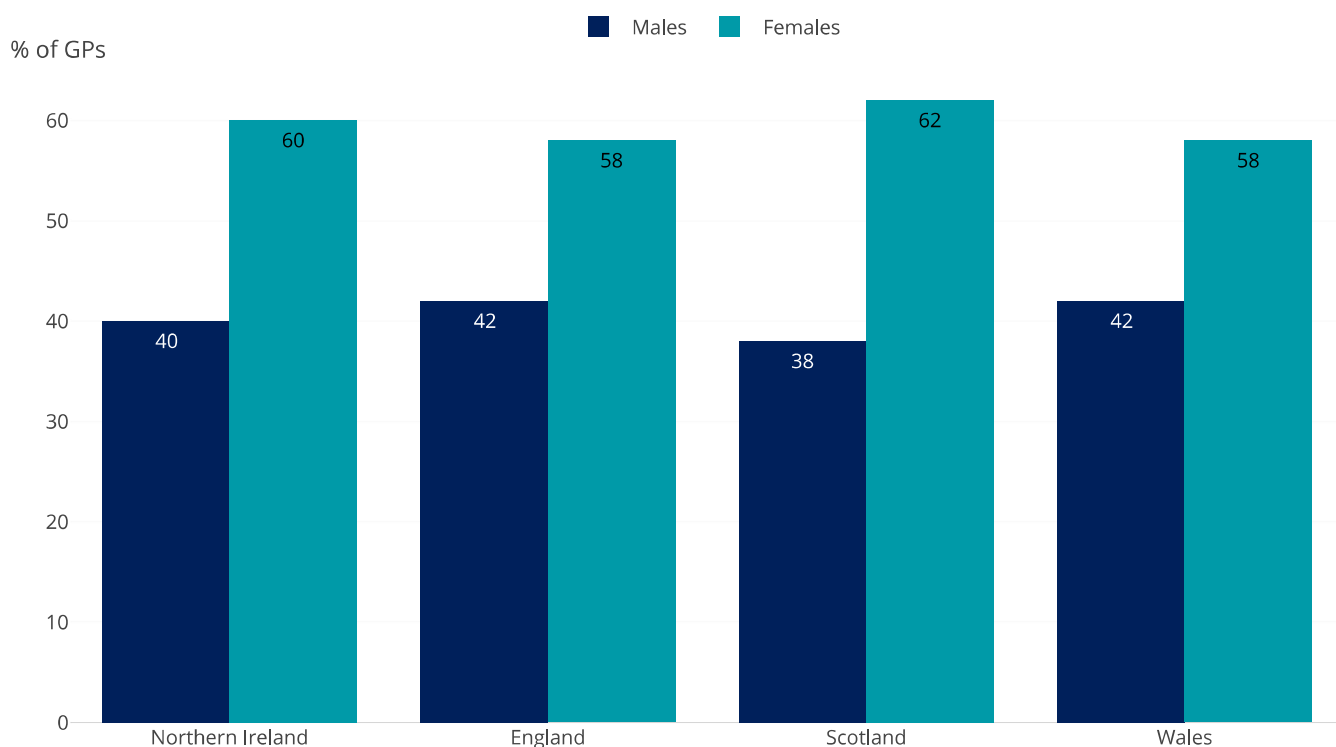
## 5. General Medical Services UK Comparisons

This section contains General Medical Services comparisons with other UK nations. Data for GPs reflect what is reported at Northern Ireland level i.e. headcount and includes Unrestricted Principals or Equivalentents (UPEs), Salaried GPs and Retainers.

### 5.1 GPs by gender UK comparisons

Like Northern Ireland, the gender profiles of GPs in England, Scotland and Wales are majority female. The proportion of GPs that are female ranges from 62% in Scotland to 58% in both England and Wales. It should be noted that proportions are calculated using headcount meaning individual work patterns are not reflected.

**Figure 5.1: GPs by gender UK comparisons, 2022/23**



Download data:

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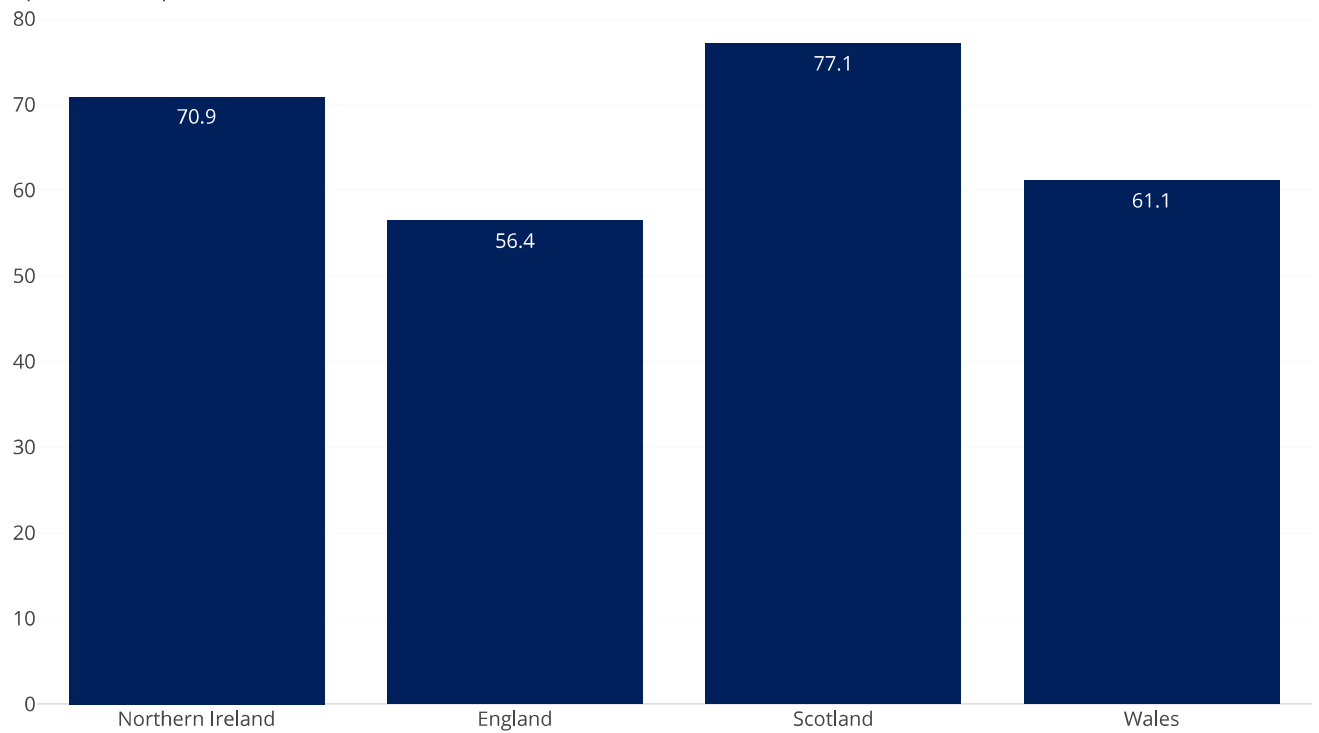
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### 5.2 GPs per head of population UK Comparisons

Scotland has the highest headcount number of GPs per 100,000 registered patients (77.1) followed by Northern Ireland (70.9). Wales had 61.1 GPs per 100,000 registered patients while England had the lowest ratio at 56.4.

**Figure 5.2: GPs per 100,000 registered patients, 2022/23**

GPs per 100,000 patients



Download data:

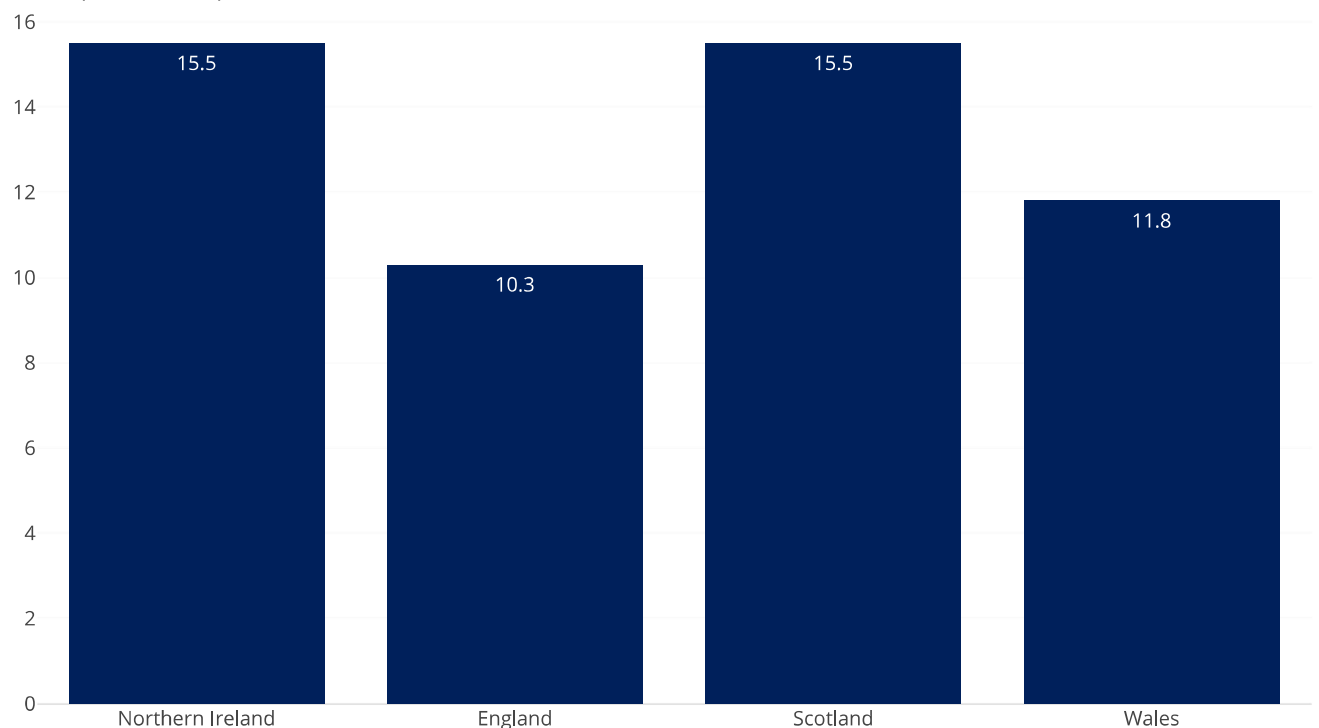
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### 5.3 GP practices per head of population UK comparisons

Scotland and Northern Ireland (both 15.5) have more GP practices per 100,000 registered patients than Wales (11.8) and England (10.3). GP practices vary in size and number of live GP contracts associated with them. This means comparisons using this measure have to be treated with a degree of caution.

**Figure 5.3: GP practices per 100,000 registered patients, 2022/23**

Practices per 100,000 patients



Download data:

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## About this publication

This annual report contains high level summary information in relation to General Practitioners (GPs), GP practices and registered patients including registration activity and payments processed by Business Services Organisation (BSO) towards the overall cost of GP services in Northern Ireland.

A number of United Kingdom (UK) comparisons are also included. The report does not contain data on the treatment of patients as individual GPs maintain their own clinical information systems.

Headline results, supported by relevant charts, infographics, commentary, and user guidance are included in the main body of the report. The detailed tables which underpin each of the sections, and which provide further trend, demographic and regional breakdowns at Local Government District (LGD), Local Commissioning Group (Health Trust) and GP Federation level, are included as [Annex Tables](#).

This publication has been produced by independent statisticians within the FPS Information Unit. They are on secondment from the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA). It has been compiled in accordance with the Code of Practice for Statistics.

Further information about the work of FPS and the manner in which these statistics were produced can be found at the end of this publication.

## User engagement

Statisticians in the Information Unit are regularly in contact with key users of the statistics. While previously readership surveys alone were used to provide an overall assessment of whether user needs were being met, the current approach employed is to supplement these surveys with focused consultations with key users on a rolling basis. This approach helps to gain greater insight into how the statistics are used and to identify additional specific requirements. In addition, any ad hoc requests for information are recorded centrally in a database and these records are used to provide intelligence from a wider set of users in relation to changing requirements. Statisticians have also piloted an online user engagement showcase event to exchange information with users on potential future developments in relation to the publications. An outline of future developments as a result of user engagement is provided in the [General Medical Services Statistics User Engagement Action Plan](#).

## This is a National Statistics Publication

The UK Statistics Authority designated these statistics as National Statistics on 11th May 2022. National Statistics status means that official statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and public value. All official statistics should comply with all aspects of the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#). They are awarded National Statistics status following an [assessment](#) by the Authority's regulatory arm. The Authority considers whether the statistics meet the highest standards of Code compliance, including the value they add to public decisions and debate. These statistics were considered as part of a wider assessment of the BSO Family Practitioner Services statistics. Since the assessment by the UK Statistics Authority, we have continued to comply with the Code of Practice for Statistics, and have made the following improvement:

- A suite of tables has been produced detailing the [number of registered patients at each GP practice in NI broken down by age and gender](#). These tables are available from 2012 to 2023.

Find out more about National and Official Statistics on the [UK Statistics Authority website](#).



# Publication Notes

## Family Practitioner Services

Family Practitioner Services (FPS) is part of the BSO's Operations Directorate. It provides a range of essential services to Health and Social Care organisations, primary care contractors and patients.

FPS calculates payments to health professionals in the dental, pharmacy, general practice and ophthalmic sectors through Northern Ireland. It also maintains the central register of patients registered with GP Practices in Northern Ireland, issuing medical cards and processing changes such as name, address and doctor.

It provides professional advice, support and information to customers and members of the public and maintains the pharmaceutical, dental and the Northern Ireland Primary Medical Performers lists. FPS also provides the call and recall services for breast, cervical and bowel cancer screening in Northern Ireland.

## Next edition

This publication is issued annually. It is expected that the next edition shall be published in June 2024. In the interim, quarterly tables are published separately. The quarterly figures are provisional until the annual publication for that year issues, at which point they are finalised. The release calendar for future statistical publications is available on the BSO website.

# Technical Notes

## Target Audience

The target audience for this publication has been defined as: the Department of Health, Strategic Planning and Performance Group (formerly HSC Board) and Health Trusts in Northern Ireland, health professionals, academics, HSC Stakeholders, the media and the general public.

## Main usages

This publication contains National Statistics on General Medical Services for the most recent financial year (and earlier years where available on a comparable basis).

They can be used to monitor trends in General Medical Services over time and across Northern Ireland.

The information can be used to support decision making, inform policy, provide advice to ministers, answer a wide range of Assembly Questions and Freedom of Information requests, for national and local press articles and, where appropriate, for international comparison.

## Data Quality Summary

Figures presented for GPs refer to Unrestricted Principals or Equivalent (UPEs), Salaried GPs and Retainers and do not include Locums. GP numbers are based on headcount and do not therefore reflect changes in working patterns. GP Practice characteristics vary in terms of Full Time Equivalent (FTE) number of GPs assigned to a practice, number of sites a practice operates from, and number of patients registered to a practice.

The count of registered patients is based on live registrations at the 31st March each year. There may be a lag between a patient presenting themselves at a GP Practice and completion of registration. This lag may be greater for patients who have to provide additional documentation as proof of entitlement to services. Similarly for deductions, there may be a lag in removing individuals from the index of registered patients.

There are differences between the figures for GP Registered Patients and residential population. At March 2021, the number of individuals on the index of registered patients was approximately 5.5% higher than the Northern Ireland population in the same month, as measured by the 2021 Census. This discrepancy can arise from a number of factors, for example, time lags in removing patients from GP lists following death or emigration, Cross Border Workers registered with a Northern Ireland GP, or registered patients not completing the 2021 Census.

GP Registered Patient counts by Local Commissioning Group (Health Trust), Local Government District and GP Federation are based on the location of the practice the patient is registered to as opposed to the patient's home address.

In cases where a GP Practice is split over more than one site it is only counted as one practice and data presented including average patient counts per practice and distance to nearest practice are based on the Primary Practice.

BSO Payment towards GP Services presented in this report refers to the payments that BSO has processed on behalf of the Strategic Planning and Performance Group, which replaced the Health and Social Care Board (HSCB) in April 2022, towards the overall cost of GP Services in Northern Ireland. This expenditure relates to payments processed in a given year and not the cost of the service provided in that year.

Further details relating to Data Quality are provided [here](#) in the Background Quality Report and the FPS Quality Assurance of Administrative Data Report.

## National/International comparisons

This publication contains comparisons between General Medical Services in Northern Ireland and other regions of the United Kingdom. The comparative data is available from the following sources:



England

[Statistics on General Medical Services](#)

Wales

[Statistics on General Medical Services](#)

Scotland

[Statistics on General Medical Services](#)

## Further Information

Further information about Northern Ireland and its health services, which may assist readers in interpreting this publication, is available from the following sources:

[BSO GP Prescribing data](#)

[BSO data on HSC Pharmacy Services](#)

[Department of Health information relating to Community Pharmacists](#)

[BSO Quarterly GP Practice List Sizes](#)

[NISRA demographic statistics on the population of Northern Ireland, including mid-year estimates and population projections](#)

[Census 21 Results | Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency \(nisra.gov.uk\)](#)

[The Honest Broker Service \(Providing Access to Health Care Data to internal HSCNI and External Researchers\)](#)

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