



# The NHS in Scotland

## Overview

NHS Scotland currently employs approximately 140,000 staff who work across 14 regional NHS Boards, seven Special NHS Boards and one public health body. Each NHS Board is accountable to Scottish Ministers, supported by the Scottish Government Health and Social Care Directorates.

Regional NHS Boards are responsible for the protection and the improvement of their population's health and for the delivery of frontline healthcare services. Special NHS Boards support the regional NHS Boards by providing a range of important specialist and national services.

Scotland was granted its own Parliament in 1999 and this has had significant influence on how the NHS in Scotland has evolved and changed compared to NHS England. The Scottish Parliament deals with areas of life that are 'devolved' to Scotland, and areas that are 'reserved' are governed by the UK parliament at Westminster. Health is an example of a devolved service.

The re-structuring of services that occurred in NHS England some years ago did not take place in NHS Scotland so, for example, there are no clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) in Scotland. Another key difference is that general practices can be owned and managed by private health care organisations in England, but in Scotland this is not allowed by law.

In the last two years, primary health care has become aligned with social services in Scotland and health care and social care organisations have merged into 'Health and Social Care Partnerships'. The aim of the partnerships is to improve community care for patients and facilitate working relations between different community organisations.

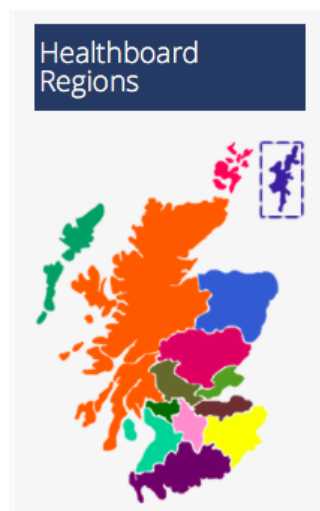
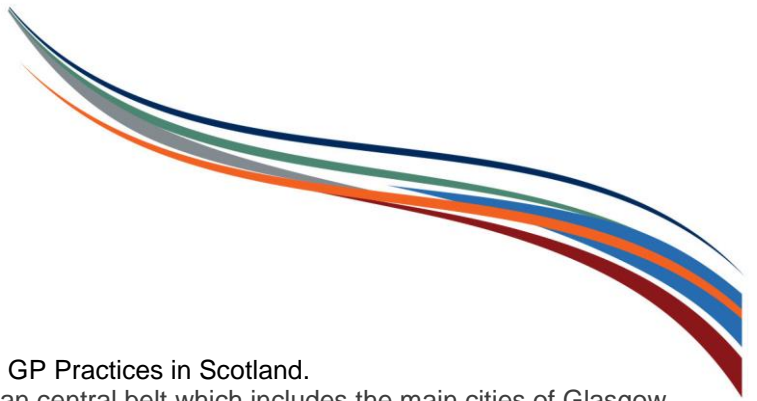


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## General practice in Scotland

There are 4,953 GPs (excluding locums) and 958 GP Practices in Scotland.

Most of the population of Scotland lives in the urban central belt which includes the main cities of Glasgow, Edinburgh and Dundee.

Approximately 20% of the Scottish population of 5.3 million lives in remote and rural areas which are often areas of outstanding natural beauty. These areas include the Scottish Highlands and the islands to the West and North of the mainland. Gaelic is a commonly used language in the North and Western islands of Scotland and is part of the heritage of these areas. Almost all Gaelic speakers are fluent in English and there are no problems with communication.

Rural GPs have a more varied career than their urban counterparts and may be involved in running a GP community hospital, providing wider services to patients who have suffered accidents and injuries, as well as being part of close-knit primary healthcare team.

[NHS Scotland](#)

