

INFORMATION
ANALYSIS
DIRECTORATE



Northern Ireland

Waiting Time Statistics:

Outpatient Waiting Times

Quarter Ending June 2018



Department of
Health
An Roinn Sláinte
Máinnystrie O Poustie
www.health-ni.gov.uk

Reader Information

Purpose: This statistical release presents information on waiting times for a first consultant-led outpatient appointment in Northern Ireland and reports on the performance of the Health and Social Care (HSC) Trusts against the 2018/19 Ministerial waiting time target, which states that:

“By March 2019, 50% of patients should wait no longer than 9 weeks for a first outpatient appointment; with no patient waiting longer than 52 weeks.”

This statistical release details information on the number of patients waiting, and length of time waiting, for a first consultant-led outpatient appointment in HSC Trusts at 30th June 2018. It also includes activity for a first consultant-led outpatient appointment commissioned by the Health Service during the quarter ending June 2018. Data are presented by HSC Trust, specialty and time band. Information on Integrated Clinical Assessment and Treatment Services (ICATS) waiting times are available in the accompanying CSV file.

Statistical Quality: The ‘*Outpatient Waiting Times Publication – Supporting Documentation*’ booklet details the technical guidance and definitions used, as well as notes on how to use the data contained within this statistical release. This booklet is available to view or download from:

<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/northern-ireland-waiting-time-statistics-outpatient-waiting-times-june-2018>

Internet: <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/articles/outpatient-waiting-times>

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Target audience: Department of Health (DoH), Chief Executives of the HSC Board and Trusts in Northern Ireland, health care professionals, Health & Social Care stakeholders, academics, the media and the general public.

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By March 2019, 50% of patients should wait no longer than 9 weeks for a first outpatient appointment, and no patient should wait longer than 52 weeks.

Total number of patients waiting at 30th June 2018

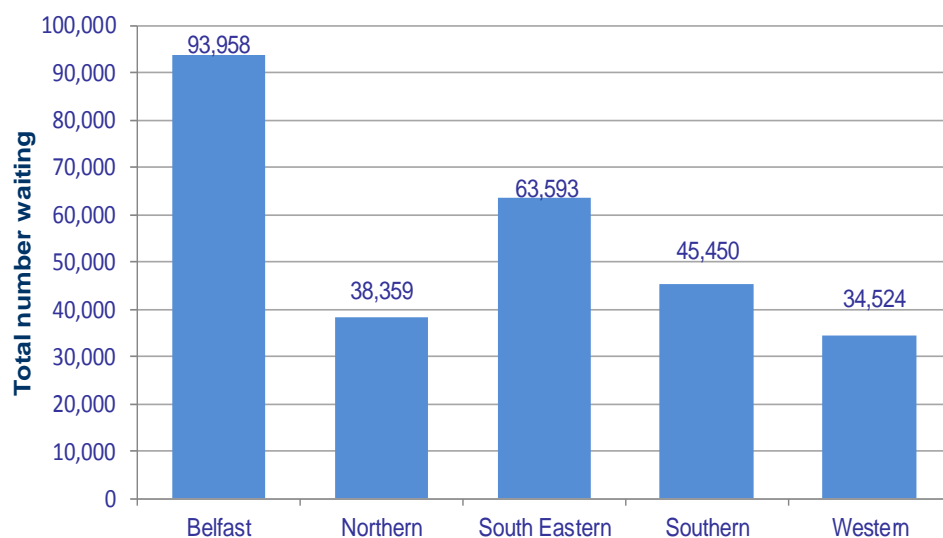
There were
275,884 patients
waiting for a first outpatient
appointment in Northern
Ireland

An **increase of 2.2%** on
the previous quarter

An **increase of 4.3%** on
the same quarter last year

Source: CH3 Return

At 30th June 2018, a total of 275,884 patients were waiting for a first consultant-led outpatient appointment, 2.2% (6,050) more than at 31st March 2018 (269,834) and 4.3% (11,433) more than at 30th June 2017 (264,451) (Table 1).



Source: CH3 Return

A number of outpatient services may not be provided at a patient's local HSC Trust, and instead are provided at a single regional centre for Northern Ireland. As patients are reported against the HSC Trust responsible for the service to which they have been referred, users should be cautious in how they use these data (see explanatory note 9).

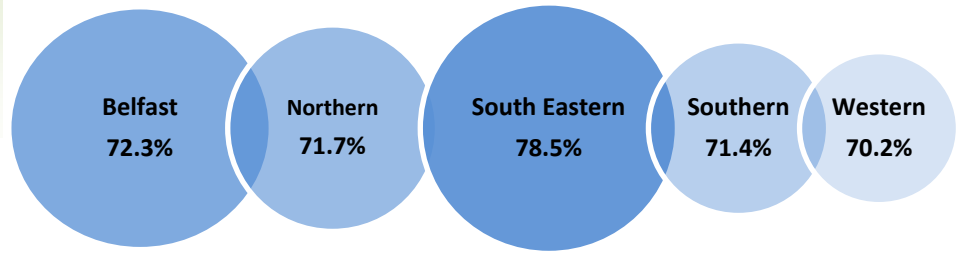
Over one third (34.1%) of those waiting for a first consultant-led outpatient appointment were in the Belfast HSC Trust, with a further 23.1% in the South Eastern HSC Trust, 16.5% in the Southern HSC Trust, 13.9% in the Northern HSC Trust and 12.5% in the Western HSC Trust (Table 2a).

Three fifths (60.8%, 167,619) of the 275,884 patients were waiting for a first outpatient appointment in one of the following specialties: Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT) (36,047); Trauma and Orthopaedic (T&O) Surgery (30,209); General Surgery (26,841); Ophthalmology (23,582); Neurology (17,987); Dermatology (17,333) and Gynaecology (15,620) (Table 3a).

Patients waiting more than 9 weeks at 30th June 2018

This element was **not achieved** by Northern Ireland as a whole

73.2%
of patients
were waiting longer
than 9 weeks



Percentage waiting over 9 weeks

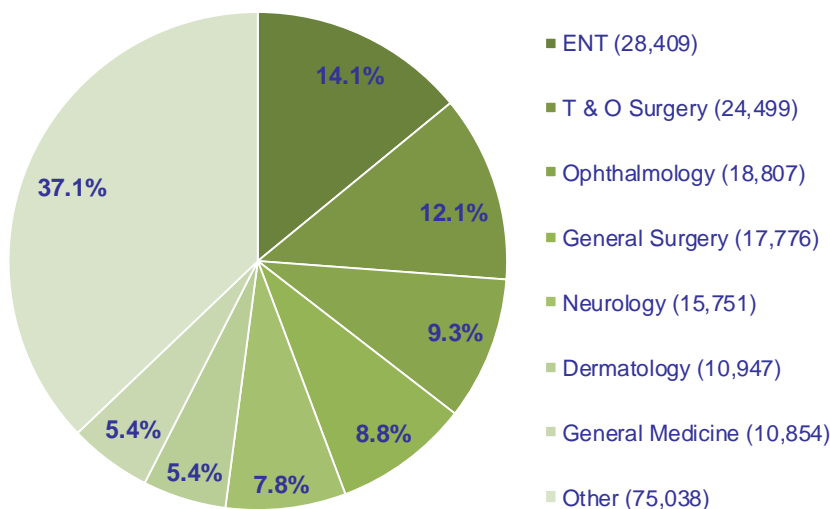
Source: CH3 Return

Achievement of the 9 week target requires that less than 50% of patients should be waiting over 9 weeks for a first consultant-led outpatient appointment.

Almost three quarters (73.2%, 202,081) of patients were waiting more than 9 weeks for a first consultant-led outpatient appointment at 30th June 2018, compared with 73.5% (198,296) at 31st March 2018 and 71.6% (189,289) at 30th June 2017 (Table 1).

At 30th June 2018, the 9 week element of the target was not achieved by Northern Ireland as a whole or by any individual HSC Trust (Table 2a). Data users should be aware that some outpatient services are not provided at every HSC Trust (see explanatory note 9).

Patients waiting more than 9 weeks by specialty



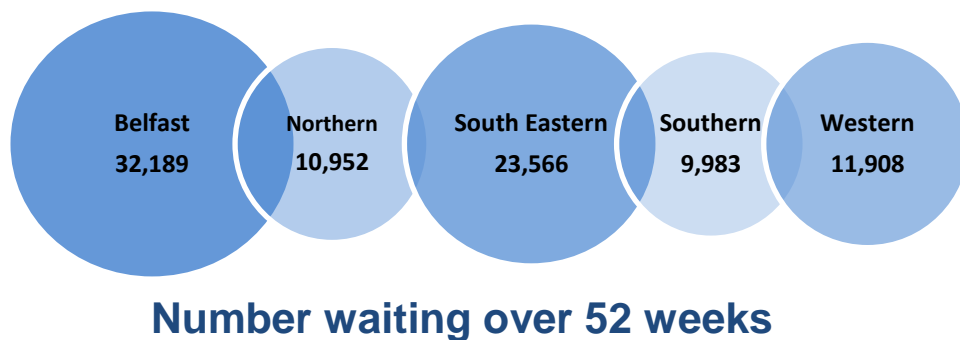
Source: CH3 Return

Just under two-thirds (62.9%, 127,043) of the 202,081 patients waiting more than 9 weeks for a first consultant-led outpatient appointment at 30th June 2018 were in one of the following specialties: Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT); Trauma and Orthopaedic (T&O) Surgery; Ophthalmology; General Surgery; Neurology; Dermatology and General Medicine (Table 3a).

Patients waiting more than 52 weeks at 30th June 2018

This element was **not achieved** by Northern Ireland as a whole

88,598
patients
were waiting longer
than 52 weeks



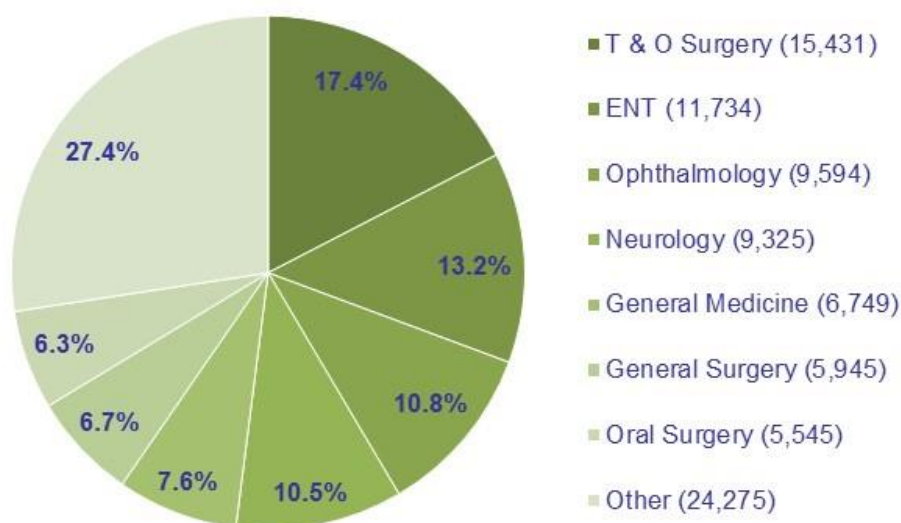
Source: CH3 Return

At 30th June 2018, 32.1% (88,598) of patients were waiting more than 52 weeks for a first consultant-led outpatient appointment, compared with 30.9% (83,392) at 31st March 2018, and 24.2% (64,074) at 30th June 2017 (Table 1).

At 30th June 2018, the 52 week element of the target was not achieved by Northern Ireland as a whole or by any individual HSC Trust (Table 2a). Data users should be aware that some outpatient services are not provided at every HSC Trust (see explanatory note 9).

Over a third (37.1%, 23,566) of patients in the South Eastern HSC Trust were waiting longer than 52 weeks at 30th June 2018, 34.5% (11,908) in the Western HSC Trust, 34.3% (32,189) in the Belfast HSC Trust, 28.6% (10,952) in the Northern HSC Trust and 22.0% (9,983) in the Southern HSC Trust (Table 2a).

Patients waiting more than 52 weeks by speciality

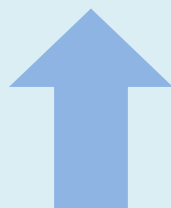


A total of 72.6% (64,323) of the 88,598 patients waiting more than 52 weeks for a first consultant-led outpatient appointment were in one of the following specialties: Trauma and Orthopaedic (T&O) Surgery; Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT); Ophthalmology; Neurology; General Medicine; General Surgery and Oral Surgery (Table 3a).

Source: CH3 Return

Completed waits for a first outpatient appointment commissioned by the Health Service during quarter ending June 2018

There were
124,103
first outpatient attendances
commissioned by the Health Service



An **increase of 0.7%** on the previous quarter

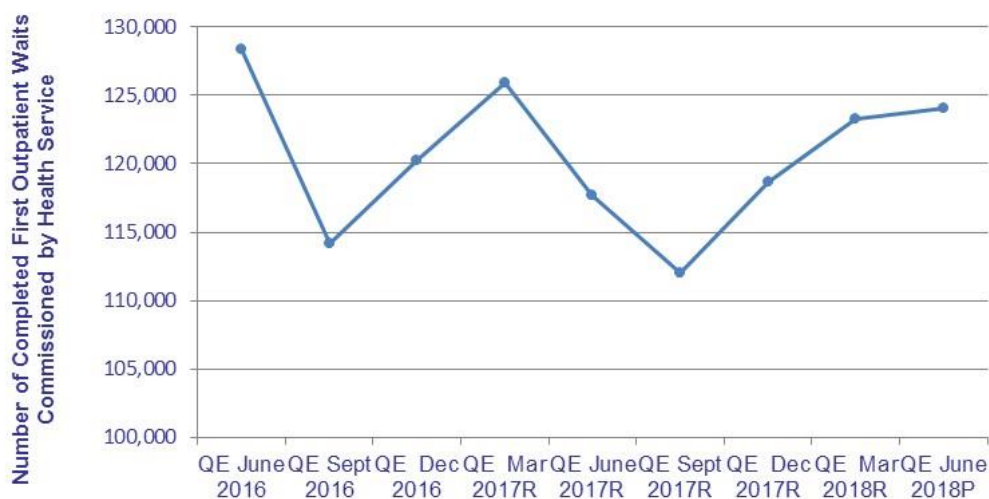


An **increase of 5.5%** on the same quarter last year

Source: QOAR and IS1 Part 1 Returns

There were 123,375 attendances for a first consultant-led outpatient appointment in Health Service hospitals in Northern Ireland during the quarter ending June 2018. This was 2.0% (2,408) more than during the quarter ending March 2018 (120,967), and 5.4% (6,274) more than during the quarter ending June 2017 (117,101) (Table 4).

During the quarter ending June 2018, 728 Health Service patients attended a first outpatient appointment within the Independent Sector. This was 68.7% (1,600) less than the number who attended during the quarter ending March 2018 (2,328), and 31.2% (173) more than the number who attended in the same quarter last year (555) (Table 4).



Source: QOAR and IS1 Part 1 Returns
PData is provisional

When the number of attendances commissioned by the Health Service, within the Independent Sector, during the quarter ending June 2018 (728) is combined with that for outpatients attending a first outpatient appointment in Health Service hospitals during the same period (123,375), provisional figures indicate that

(124,103) outpatients attended a first appointment in Northern Ireland commissioned by the Health Service (Table 4). This is an increase of 0.7% (808) on the number seen during the quarter ending March 2018 (123,295), and 5.5% (6,447) more than during the quarter ending June 2017 (117,656).

Appendix 1: Tables

Table 1: Quarterly outpatient waiting lists – 30th June 2018¹

First Consultant-Led Outpatient Appointment	Current Quarter (30 th June 2018)	Previous Quarter (31 st Mar 2018)	Same Quarter Last Year (30 th Jun 2017)
Total Patients Waiting	275,884	269,834	264,451
Number waiting over 9 weeks	202,081	198,296	189,289
<i>Percentage waiting over 9 weeks</i>	73.2%	73.5%	71.6%
Number waiting over 52 weeks	88,598	83,392	64,074

Source: CH3 Return

¹Refer to Explanatory Notes 1–10 & 13-14

Table 2a: Number of patients waiting for a first consultant-led outpatient appointment by HSC Trust and weeks waiting – 30th June 2018¹

HSC Trust	Patients waiting for a first consultant-led outpatient appointment, by weeks waiting							Total Waiting
	0 - 6	>6 - 9	>9 - 12	>12 - 15	>15 - 18	>18 - 52	>52	
Belfast	19,787	6,226	4,856	3,137	3,512	24,251	32,189	93,958
Northern	8,162	2,677	2,558	1,537	1,809	10,664	10,952	38,359
South Eastern	10,287	3,355	3,045	2,066	2,463	18,811	23,566	63,593
Southern	9,804	3,209	2,679	1,904	2,136	15,735	9,983	45,450
Western	8,073	2,223	1,991	1,280	1,383	7,666	11,908	34,524
Total	56,113	17,690	15,129	9,924	11,303	77,127	88,598	275,884

Source: CH3 Return

¹Refer to Explanatory Notes 1–10 & 13-14

Table 2b: Percentage of patients waiting for a first consultant-led outpatient appointment by HSC Trust and weeks waiting – 30th June 2018¹

HSC Trust	Patients waiting for a first consultant-led outpatient appointment, by weeks waiting						
	0 - 6	>6 - 9	>9 - 12	>12 - 15	>15 - 18	>18 - 52	>52
Belfast	21.1%	6.6%	5.2%	3.3%	3.7%	25.8%	34.3%
Northern	21.3%	7.0%	6.7%	4.0%	4.7%	27.8%	28.6%
South Eastern	16.2%	5.3%	4.8%	3.2%	3.9%	29.6%	37.1%
Southern	21.6%	7.1%	5.9%	4.2%	4.7%	34.6%	22.0%
Western	23.4%	6.4%	5.8%	3.7%	4.0%	22.2%	34.5%
Total	20.3%	6.4%	5.5%	3.6%	4.1%	28.0%	32.1%

Source: CH3 Return

¹Refer to Explanatory Notes 1–10 & 13-14

Table 3a: Number of patients waiting for a first consultant-led outpatient appointment by weeks waiting and specialty – 30th June 2018¹

Specialty	Patients waiting for a first consultant-led outpatient appointment, by weeks waiting							Total Waiting
	0 - 6	>6 - 9	>9 - 12	>12 - 15	>15 - 18	>18 - 52	>52	
ENT	5,492	2,146	2,042	1,416	1,708	11,509	11,734	36,047
T & O Surgery	4,545	1,165	1,021	593	724	6,730	15,431	30,209
General Surgery	7,039	2,026	1,590	1,013	1,165	8,063	5,945	26,841
Ophthalmology	3,533	1,242	1,215	795	862	6,341	9,594	23,582
Neurology	1,534	702	564	438	581	4,843	9,325	17,987
Dermatology	5,043	1,343	1,184	762	736	5,303	2,962	17,333
Gynaecology	4,908	1,305	1,055	663	659	3,741	3,289	15,620
General Medicine	2,234	662	498	345	427	2,835	6,749	13,750
Paediatrics	3,424	1,432	1,159	801	856	3,175	1,768	12,615
Rheumatology	1,556	630	627	423	458	3,387	4,887	11,968
Oral Surgery	1,087	392	434	273	390	3,718	5,545	11,839
Gastroenterology	1,487	479	491	295	324	2,797	2,834	8,707
Thoracic Medicine	1,465	584	514	303	372	2,845	2,279	8,362
Cardiology	3,588	1,096	731	447	408	1,749	221	8,240
Pain Management	1,365	402	399	312	396	3,207	1,621	7,702
Urology	1,809	483	385	276	330	1,884	1,929	7,096
Plastic Surgery	656	271	238	138	212	1,801	1,763	5,079
Geriatric Medicine	937	207	150	90	116	510	269	2,279
Restorative Dentistry	345	91	96	80	104	913	298	1,927
Other	4,066	1,032	736	461	475	1,776	155	8,701
All Specialties	56,113	17,690	15,129	9,924	11,303	77,127	88,598	275,884

Source: CH3 Return

¹Refer to Explanatory Notes 1–10 & 13-14

Table 3b: Percentage of patients waiting for a first consultant-led outpatient appointment by weeks waiting and speciality – 30th June 2018¹

Specialty	Patients waiting for a first consultant-led outpatient appointment, by weeks waiting						
	0 - 6	>6 - 9	>9 - 12	>12 - 15	>15 - 18	>18 - 52	>52
T & O Surgery	15.2%	6.0%	5.7%	3.9%	4.7%	31.9%	32.6%
ENT	15.0%	3.9%	3.4%	2.0%	2.4%	22.3%	51.1%
General Surgery	26.2%	7.5%	5.9%	3.8%	4.3%	30.0%	22.1%
Ophthalmology	15.0%	5.3%	5.2%	3.4%	3.7%	26.9%	40.7%
Gynaecology	8.5%	3.9%	3.1%	2.4%	3.2%	26.9%	51.8%
Neurology	29.1%	7.7%	6.8%	4.4%	4.2%	30.6%	17.1%
General Medicine	31.4%	8.4%	6.8%	4.2%	4.2%	24.0%	21.1%
Dermatology	16.2%	4.8%	3.6%	2.5%	3.1%	20.6%	49.1%
Urology	27.1%	11.4%	9.2%	6.3%	6.8%	25.2%	14.0%
Paediatrics	13.0%	5.3%	5.2%	3.5%	3.8%	28.3%	40.8%
Rheumatology	9.2%	3.3%	3.7%	2.3%	3.3%	31.4%	46.8%
Gastroenterology	17.1%	5.5%	5.6%	3.4%	3.7%	32.1%	32.5%
Oral Surgery	17.5%	7.0%	6.1%	3.6%	4.4%	34.0%	27.3%
Cardiology	43.5%	13.3%	8.9%	5.4%	5.0%	21.2%	2.7%
Pain Management	17.7%	5.2%	5.2%	4.1%	5.1%	41.6%	21.0%
Thoracic Medicine	25.5%	6.8%	5.4%	3.9%	4.7%	26.6%	27.2%
Plastic Surgery	12.9%	5.3%	4.7%	2.7%	4.2%	35.5%	34.7%
Geriatric Medicine	41.1%	9.1%	6.6%	3.9%	5.1%	22.4%	11.8%
Restorative Dentistry	17.9%	4.7%	5.0%	4.2%	5.4%	47.4%	15.5%
Other	46.7%	11.9%	8.5%	5.3%	5.5%	20.4%	1.8%
All Specialties	20.3%	6.4%	5.5%	3.6%	4.1%	28.0%	32.1%

Source: CH3 Return

¹Refer to Explanatory Notes 1–10 & 13-14

Table 4: Number of completed waits for a first consultant-led outpatient appointment commissioned by the Health Service: QE June 2016 - QE June 2018²

Quarter Ending	Number of Completed First Outpatient Waits		
	Within Health Service Hospitals	Independent Sector*	Total Commissioned by Health Service
QE June 2016	127,223	1,133	128,356
QE Sept 2016	113,682	526	114,208
QE Dec 2016	119,587	673	120,260
QE Mar 2017	124,143	1,725	125,713
QE June 2017 ^R	117,101	555	117,650
QE Sept 2017 ^R	110,935	1,109	109,416
QE Dec 2017 ^R	117,820	880	118,592
QE Mar 2018 ^R	120,967	2,328	122,125
QE June 2018 ^P	123,375	728	124,103

Source: QOAR and IS1 Part 1 Returns

^P Data are currently provisional

^R Data has been revised

* Not National Statistics

²Refer to Explanatory Notes 1-2, 4 & 11–14

Appendix 2: Explanatory Notes

1. The sources for the data contained in this release are the DoH CH3, QOAR and IS1 Part 1 Returns. These returns collect information from Health and Social Care Trusts on a quarterly basis.
2. The '*Outpatient Waiting Times Publication – Supporting Documentation*' booklet details the technical guidance and definitions used, as well as notes on how to use the data contained within this statistical release. This booklet is available to view or download from:
<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/northern-ireland-waiting-time-statistics-outpatient-waiting-times-june-2018>.
3. All of the data contained in the tables are available on a quarterly basis and can be supplied by individual specialty or Provider HSC Trust if this level of detail is required. In addition, quarterly data relating to waiting times for a first consultant-led outpatient appointment have been published in spreadsheet format (CSV), split by HSC Trust, Specialty and Programme of Care, in order to aid secondary analysis. These data are available at <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/articles/outpatient-waiting-times-june-2018>.
4. Information includes patients living outside Northern Ireland and privately funded patients waiting for treatment in Health Service hospitals in Northern Ireland.
5. Outpatient waiters are defined as patients still waiting for their first outpatient appointment at the end of the quarter, including those who have cancelled or missed a previous appointment. An outpatient appointment is to enable a patient to see a consultant, a member of their team or locum for such a member, in respect of one referral. Waiting time for a first outpatient appointment begins on the date the HSC Trust receives a referral for a first outpatient appointment and ends on the date a patient attends a first outpatient appointment. Patients who cannot attend (CNA) have their waiting time adjusted to commence on the date they informed the HSC Trust they could not attend, while patients who do not attend (DNA) have their waiting time adjusted to commence on the date of their DNA.
6. From 1st April 2014, Oral Surgery services undertaken by consultants contracted to the South Eastern HSC Trust were centralised, meaning that records for patients waiting for this service in both the Northern and Southern HSC Trusts are now held and managed in the South Eastern HSC Trust. A breakdown of the waiting times for these patients broken down by HSC Trust has been provided in the spreadsheet located at <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/articles/outpatient-waiting-times-june-2018>.

7. Each outpatient waiting time band relates to the number of completed weeks a patient has been waiting for outpatient assessment. For example, a patient waiting exactly 6 weeks would be included in the 0-6 week time band and a patient waiting 6 weeks and 1 day would be included in the >6-9 (greater than 6 weeks but waiting no longer than 9 weeks) time band. The Ministerial target, for outpatient waiting times, as set out in the Health and Social Care (Commissioning Plan) Direction states that by March 2019, 50% of patients should wait no longer than nine weeks for a first outpatient appointment, with no patient waiting longer than 52 weeks.
8. Some people will be waiting on more than one waiting list or be on the waiting list for more than one outpatient appointment/admission/diagnostic test at the same time due to having more than one condition.
9. The Ministerial target, for outpatient waiting times, as set out in the Health and Social Care (Commissioning Plan) Direction states that by March 2019, 50% of patients should wait no longer than nine weeks for a first outpatient appointment, with no patient waiting longer than 52 weeks.
10. A number of outpatient services may not be provided at a patient's local HSC Trust or at each of the five HSC Trusts, and instead are provided at a single regional centre for Northern Ireland. In such circumstances, patients from one HSC Trust area will be waiting to be seen at a service provided at another HSC Trust. In some cases a consultant from one HSC Trust may provide a 'visiting' service at another HSC Trust, and so the patient may not be reported at the HSC Trust at which they attend. Users should therefore be cautious in how they use these data. For example, they should not be used to calculate the total number of patients waiting per head of the population residing within each Trust area, as HSC Trusts that provide services for the whole of Northern Ireland will have a higher number of patients waiting per head of the population than those that provide more localised services. Neither should the actual number of patients waiting longer than the recommended waiting time be used as indicator of poor performance within an individual HSC Trust. Users who require an indication of the latter are advised to refer to the commentary section of the publication which provides an indication of the percentage of total waiters that have been waiting over the maximum recommended waiting times, within each HSC Trust.
11. The total number of completed outpatient waits each quarter, within HSC hospitals, is derived as the total number of attendances at a first outpatient appointment from the Departmental Quarterly Outpatient Activity Return (QOAR).

12. The number of patients who received an outpatient assessment, commissioned by the Health Service, in the Independent Sector is collected on the IS1 Part 1 Return. These figures are provided by the HSC Board. They are published for each transferring Health and Social Care Trust (Trust responsible for the patient's waiting time). They are not National Statistics and they have not been validated by the Department; however, they have been included to provide users with a comprehensive view of completed outpatient waits during each quarter.

13. HIB surveyed data providers during 2011/12 to ascertain the cost of producing, validating and submitting the information required for this publication. This relates to the time taken to generate, validate and submit data, over and above what is already required by their organisation for internal performance management purposes. The cost to data providers of compliance within HIB's requirements for this publication, based on HSC salary costs, was £3,110.

14. Figures relating to outpatient waiting times for the quarter ending 30th September 2018 will be released on Thursday 29th November 2018.

Further information on Outpatient Waiting Times in Northern Ireland is available from:

Hospital Information Branch
Information & Analysis Directorate
Department of Health
Stormont Estate
Belfast, BT4 3SQ

✉ Email: statistics@health-ni.gov.uk

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<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/topics/doh-statistics-and-research>