

INFORMATION
ANALYSIS
DIRECTORATE



Northern Ireland Waiting Time Statistics: Outpatient Waiting Times Quarter Ending September 2016



Department of
Health
An Roinn Sláinte
Máinnystrie O Poustie
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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 2016/17 Ministerial waiting time target which states that:

“By March 2017, 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 2016. It also includes activity for a first consultant-led outpatient appointment commissioned by the Health Service during the quarter ending June 2016. 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, definitions, as well as notes on how to use the data contained within this statistical release. This booklet is available to view or download from the following link:

<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/northern-ireland-waiting-time-statistics-outpatient-waiting-times-september-2016>

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.

Price: Free

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By March 2017, 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 September 2016

There were
243,141 patients
waiting for a first outpatient
appointment in Northern
Ireland



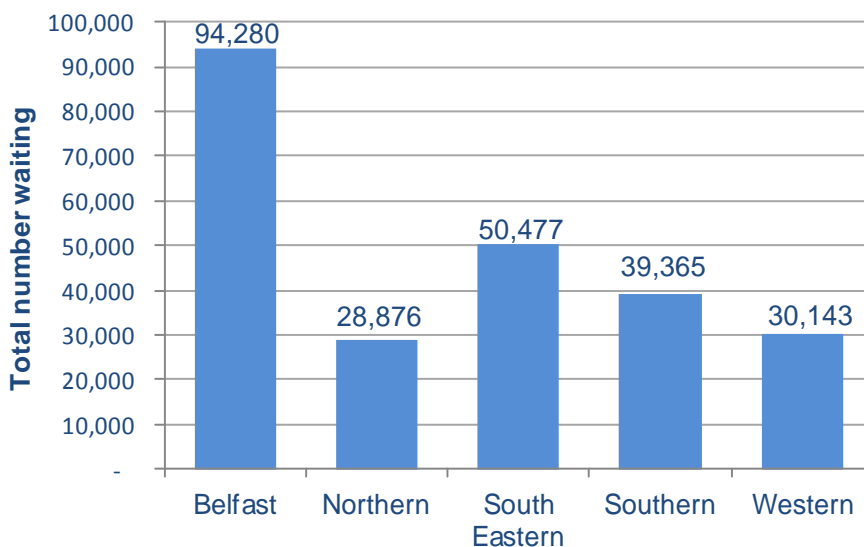
An **increase** of 7.8% on
the previous quarter



An **increase** of 5.4% on
the same quarter last year

Source: CH3 Return

At 30th September 2016, a total of 243,141 patients were waiting for a first consultant-led outpatient appointment, 7.8% (17,548) more than at 30th June 2016 (225,593) and 5.4% (12,516) more than at 30th September 2015 (230,625) (Table 1).



Almost two fifths (38.8%) were waiting for a first consultant-led outpatient appointment in the Belfast HSC Trust, with a further 20.8% in the South Eastern HSC Trust, 16.2% in the Southern HSC Trust, 12.4% in the Western HSC Trust and 11.9% in the Northern HSC Trust (Table 2a).

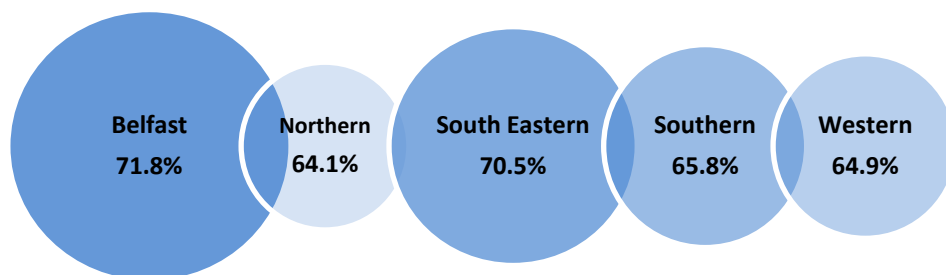
Source: CH3 Return

Nearly two thirds (63.3%, 153,965) of the 243,141 patients were waiting for a first outpatient appointment in one of the following specialties: Trauma and Orthopaedic (T&O) Surgery (31,147); Ear, Nose and Throat (30,221); General Surgery (29,779); Ophthalmology (21,792); Gynaecology (15,791); General Medicine (13,128) and Neurology (12,107) (Table 3a).

Patients waiting more than 9 weeks at 30th September 2016

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

68.8%
of patients
were waiting longer
than 9 weeks



Percentage waiting over 9 weeks

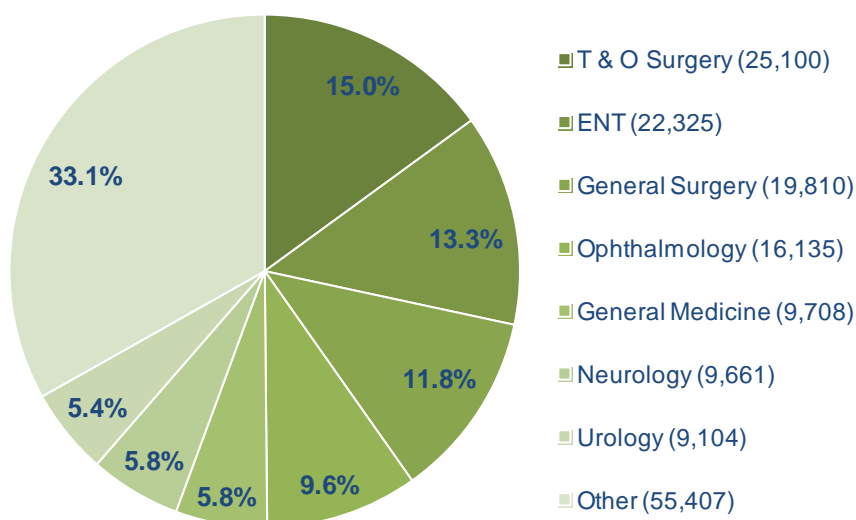
Source: CH3 Return

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.

Over two thirds (68.8%,167,250) of patients were waiting more than 9 weeks for a first consultant-led outpatient appointment at 30th September 2016, compared with 64.8% (146,167) at 30th June 2016 and 67.0% (154,591) at 30th September 2015 (Table 1).

At 30th September 2016, the 9 week element of the target was not achieved by Northern Ireland as a whole or by any individual HSC Trust (Table 2a).

Patients waiting more than 9 weeks by specialty



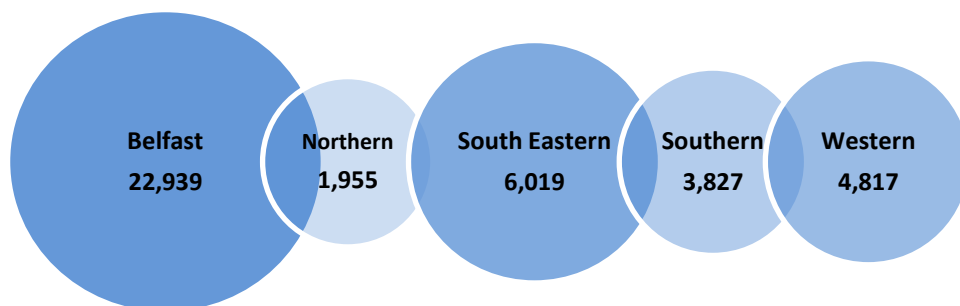
Source: CH3 Return

Just over two-thirds (66.9%, 111,843) of the 167,250 patients waiting more than 9 weeks for a first consultant-led outpatient appointment at 30th September 2016 were in one of the following specialties: Trauma and Orthopaedic (T&O) Surgery; Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT); General Surgery; Ophthalmology, General Medicine; Neurology and Urology (Table 3a).

Patients waiting more than 52 weeks at 30th September 2016

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

39,557
patients
were waiting longer
than 52 weeks



Number waiting over 52 weeks

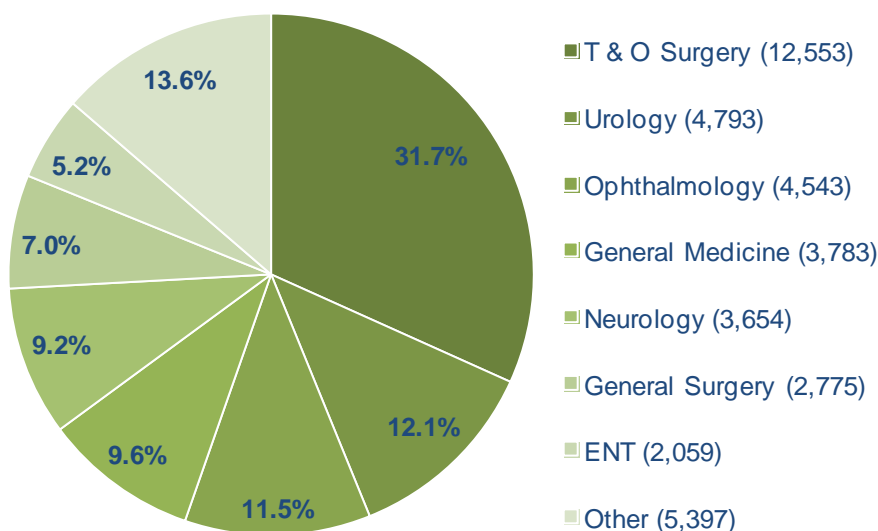
Source: CH3 Return

At 30th September 2016, 16.3% (39,557) of patients were waiting more than 52 weeks for a first consultant-led outpatient appointment, compared with 13.4% (30,170) at 30th June 2016, and 9.0% (20,840) at 30th September 2015 (Table 1).

At 30th September 2016, the 52 week element of the target was not achieved by Northern Ireland as a whole or by any individual HSC Trust (Table 2a).

Almost a quarter (24.3%, 22,939) of patients in the Belfast HSC Trust were waiting longer than 52 weeks at 30th September 2016, 16.0% (4,817) in the Western HSC Trust, 11.9% (6,019) in the South Eastern HSC Trust, 9.7% (3,827) in the Southern HSC Trust and 6.8% (1,955) in the Northern HSC Trust (Table 2a).

Patients waiting more than 52 weeks by specialty



Source: CH3 Return

A total of 86.4% (34,160) of the 39,557 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; Urology; Ophthalmology; General Medicine; Neurology; General Surgery and Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT) (Table 3a).

Completed waits for a first outpatient appointment commissioned by the Health Service during quarter ending September 2016

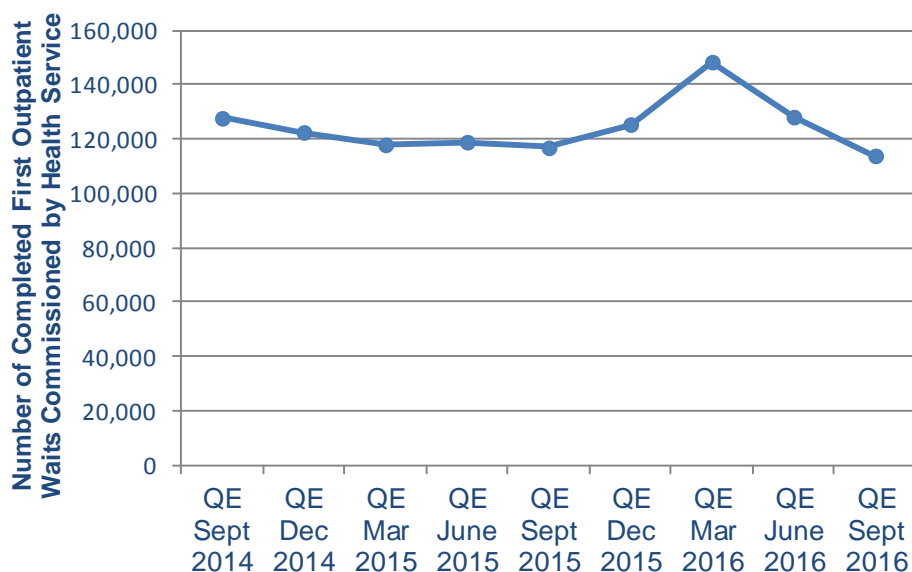
There were
113,934 first outpatient attendances
commissioned by the Health Service

A **decrease** of **11.1%**
on the previous quarter

A **decrease** of **2.5%** on
the same quarter last year

Source: QOAR and IS1 Part 1 Returns

During the quarter ending September 2016, there were 113,374 attendances for a first consultant-led outpatient appointment in Health Service hospitals in Northern Ireland, 10.8% (13,708) less than during the quarter ending June 2016 (127,082), and 2.8% (3,285) less than during the quarter ending September 2015 (116,659) (Table 4).



During the quarter ending September 2016, 560 Health Service patients attended a first outpatient appointment within the Independent Sector. This is a 50.7% decrease on the quarter ending June 2016 (1,137) but more than double on the same quarter last year (248) (Table 4).

Source: QOAR and IS1 Part 1 Returns

When the number of attendances commissioned by the Health Service, within the Independent Sector, during the quarter ending September 2016 (560) is combined with that for outpatients attending a first outpatient appointment in Health Service hospitals during the same period (113,374), the total number of outpatients who attended a first appointment in Northern Ireland for an assessment commissioned by the Health Service was 113,934 (Table 4). This is a decrease of 11.1% (14,285) on the number seen during the quarter ending June 2016 (128,219), and 2.5% less (2,973) than during the quarter ending September 2015 (116,907).

Appendix 1: Tables

Table 1: Quarterly outpatient waiting lists – 30th September 2016¹

First Consultant-Led Outpatient Appointment	Current Quarter (30 th Sept 2016)	Previous Quarter (30 th June 2016)	Same Quarter Last Year (30 th Sept 2015)
Total Patients Waiting	243,141	225,593	230,625
Number waiting over 9 weeks	167,250	146,167	154,591
<i>Percentage waiting over 9 weeks</i>	68.8%	64.8%	67.0%
Number waiting over 52 weeks	39,557	30,170	20,840

Source: CH3 Return

¹Refer to Explanatory Notes 1–8 & 11-12

Table 2a: Number of patients waiting for a first consultant-led outpatient appointment by HSC Trust and weeks waiting – 30th September 2016¹

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	20,244	6,378	4,419	4,897	4,192	31,211	22,939	94,280
Northern	7,847	2,522	1,948	2,194	1,700	10,710	1,955	28,876
South Eastern	11,053	3,820	2,897	3,418	2,882	20,388	6,019	50,477
Southern	10,066	3,392	2,585	2,783	2,485	14,227	3,827	39,365
Western	8,256	2,313	1,733	2,060	1,480	9,484	4,817	30,143
Total	57,466	18,425	13,582	15,352	12,739	86,020	39,557	243,141

Source: CH3 Return

¹Refer to Explanatory Notes 1–8 & 11-12

Table 2b: Percentage of patients waiting for a first consultant-led outpatient appointment by HSC Trust and weeks waiting – 30th September 2016¹

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	21.5%	6.8%	4.7%	5.2%	4.4%	33.1%	24.3%
Northern	27.2%	8.7%	6.7%	7.6%	5.9%	37.1%	6.8%
South Eastern	21.9%	7.6%	5.7%	6.8%	5.7%	40.4%	11.9%
Southern	25.6%	8.6%	6.6%	7.1%	6.3%	36.1%	9.7%
Western	27.4%	7.7%	5.7%	6.8%	4.9%	31.5%	16.0%
Total	23.6%	7.6%	5.6%	6.3%	5.2%	35.4%	16.3%

Source: CH3 Return

¹Refer to Explanatory Notes 1–8 & 11-12

Table 3a: Number of patients waiting for a first consultant-led outpatient appointment by weeks waiting and specialty – 30th September 2016¹

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	
T & O Surgery	4,803	1,244	1,069	1,062	1,095	9,321	12,553	31,147
ENT	5,863	2,033	1,742	2,137	1,861	14,526	2,059	30,221
General Surgery	7,659	2,310	1,916	2,152	1,916	11,051	2,775	29,779
Ophthalmology	4,226	1,431	1,079	1,312	1,101	8,100	4,543	21,792
Gynaecology	5,133	1,736	1,102	1,262	1,022	5,489	47	15,791
General Medicine	2,564	856	533	618	518	4,256	3,783	13,128
Neurology	1,823	623	531	577	498	4,401	3,654	12,107
Urology	1,686	436	356	426	324	3,205	4,793	11,226
Dermatology	4,692	1,471	944	1,024	731	2,097	18	10,977
Rheumatology	1,641	584	424	497	410	3,363	1,815	8,734
Paediatrics	2,861	961	596	714	555	2,103	661	8,451
Gastroenterology	1,643	577	439	460	353	3,404	1,189	8,065
Cardiology	3,042	834	485	521	401	2,387	236	7,906
Oral Surgery	1,324	572	440	499	388	2,731	588	6,542
Thoracic Medicine	1,426	515	415	439	367	2,788	213	6,163
Pain Management	1,170	524	362	573	441	2,911	38	6,019
Plastic Surgery	799	295	195	261	181	1,570	10	3,311
Geriatric Medicine	855	189	179	145	116	350	28	1,862
Restorative Dentistry	319	154	68	71	94	785	248	1,739
Other	3,937	1,080	707	602	367	1,182	306	8,181
All Specialties	57,466	18,425	13,582	15,352	12,739	86,020	39,557	243,141

Source: CH3 Return

¹Refer to Explanatory Notes 1–8 & 11-12

Table 3b: Percentage of patients waiting for a first consultant-led outpatient appointment by weeks waiting and specialty – 30th September 2016¹

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	15.4%	4.0%	3.4%	3.4%	3.5%	29.9%	40.3%
ENT	19.4%	6.7%	5.8%	7.1%	6.2%	48.1%	6.8%
General Surgery	25.7%	7.8%	6.4%	7.2%	6.4%	37.1%	9.3%
Ophthalmology	19.4%	6.6%	5.0%	6.0%	5.1%	37.2%	20.8%
Gynaecology	32.5%	11.0%	7.0%	8.0%	6.5%	34.8%	0.3%
General Medicine	19.5%	6.5%	4.1%	4.7%	3.9%	32.4%	28.8%
Neurology	15.1%	5.1%	4.4%	4.8%	4.1%	36.4%	30.2%
Urology	15.0%	3.9%	3.2%	3.8%	2.9%	28.5%	42.7%
Dermatology	42.7%	13.4%	8.6%	9.3%	6.7%	19.1%	0.2%
Rheumatology	18.8%	6.7%	4.9%	5.7%	4.7%	38.5%	20.8%
Paediatrics	33.9%	11.4%	7.1%	8.4%	6.6%	24.9%	7.8%
Gastroenterology	20.4%	7.2%	5.4%	5.7%	4.4%	42.2%	14.7%
Cardiology	38.5%	10.5%	6.1%	6.6%	5.1%	30.2%	3.0%
Oral Surgery	20.2%	8.7%	6.7%	7.6%	5.9%	41.7%	9.0%
Thoracic Medicine	23.1%	8.4%	6.7%	7.1%	6.0%	45.2%	3.5%
Pain Management	19.4%	8.7%	6.0%	9.5%	7.3%	48.4%	0.6%
Plastic Surgery	24.1%	8.9%	5.9%	7.9%	5.5%	47.4%	0.3%
Geriatric Medicine	45.9%	10.2%	9.6%	7.8%	6.2%	18.8%	1.5%
Restorative Dentistry	18.3%	8.9%	3.9%	4.1%	5.4%	45.1%	14.3%
Other	48.1%	13.2%	8.6%	7.4%	4.5%	14.4%	3.7%
All Specialties	23.6%	7.6%	5.6%	6.3%	5.2%	35.4%	16.3%

Source: CH3 Return

¹Refer to Explanatory Notes 1–8 & 11-12

Table 4: Number of completed waits for a first consultant-led outpatient appointment commissioned by the Health Service: QE September 2014 - QE September 2016²

Quarter Ending	Number of Completed First Outpatient Waits		
	Within Health Service Hospitals	Independent Sector*	Total Commissioned by Health Service
QE Sept 2014	118,679	9,106	127,785
QE Dec 2014	122,208	366	122,574
QE Mar 2015	117,904	80	117,984
QE June 2015	118,739	251	118,990
QE Sept 2015	116,659	248	116,907
QE Dec 2015	124,695	789	125,484
QE Mar 2016	124,713	23,763	148,476
QE June 2016 ^P	127,082	1,137	128,219
QE Sept 2016 ^P	113,374	560	113,934

Source: QOAR and IS1 Part 1

^P Data are currently provisional

* Not National Statistics

²Refer to Explanatory Notes 1-2, 4 & 9–10

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, definitions, as well as notes on how to use the data contained within this statistical release. This booklet is available to view or download from the following link:
<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/northern-ireland-waiting-time-statistics-outpatient-waiting-times-september-2016>
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>
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 centralized, 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>

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.
8. The Ministerial target, for outpatient waiting times, as set out in the Health and Social Care (Commissioning Plan) Direction states that by March 2017, 50% of patients should wait no longer than nine weeks for a first outpatient appointment, with no patient waiting longer than 52 weeks.
9. 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).
10. The number of patients that received an outpatient assessment, commissioned by the Health Service, in the Independent Sector is collected on the IS1 Part 1. 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.
11. 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.
12. Figures relating to outpatient waiting times for the quarter ending 31st December 2016 will be released on Thursday 23rd February 2017.

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

Jennifer Finlay

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Information & Analysis Directorate
Department of Health
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✉ Email: statistics@health-ni.gov.uk

This Statistical bulletin and others published by Hospital Information Branch are available to download from the DoH Internet site at:

Internet address: <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/type/statisticalreports>