

INFORMATION
ANALYSIS
DIRECTORATE



Northern Ireland Waiting Time Statistics: Outpatient Waiting Times Quarter Ending June 2017



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 2017/18 Ministerial waiting time target which states that:

“By March 2018, 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 2017. It also includes activity for a first consultant-led outpatient appointment commissioned by the Health Service during the quarter ending June 2017. 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-june-2017>

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 2018, 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 2017

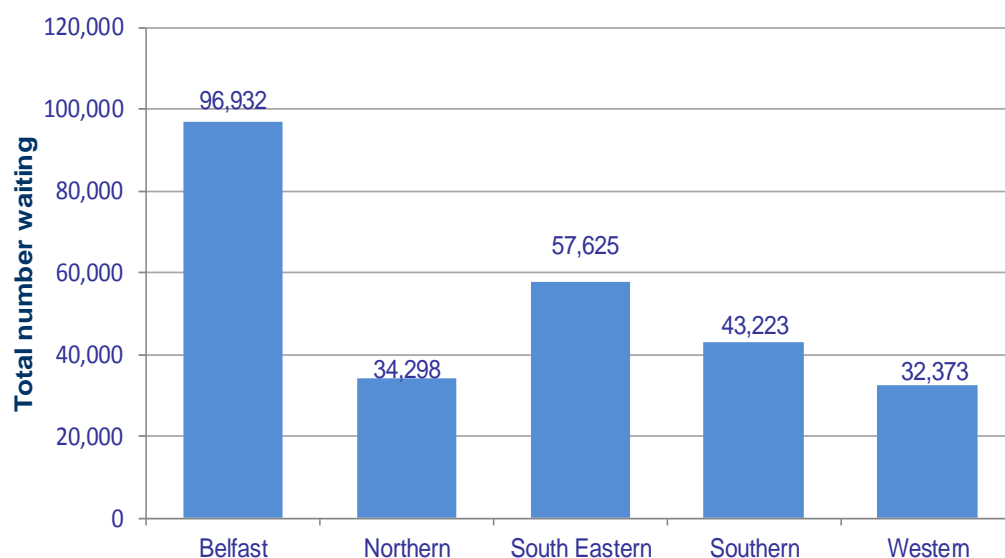
There were
264,451 patients
waiting for a first outpatient
appointment in Northern
Ireland

An **increase** of **4.5%** on
the previous quarter

An **increase** of **17.2%** on
the same quarter last year

Source: CH3 Return

At 30th June 2017, a total of 264,451 patients were waiting for a first consultant-led outpatient appointment, 4.5% (11,358) more than at 31st March 2017 (253,093) and 17.2% (38,858) more than at 30th June 2016 (225,593) (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).

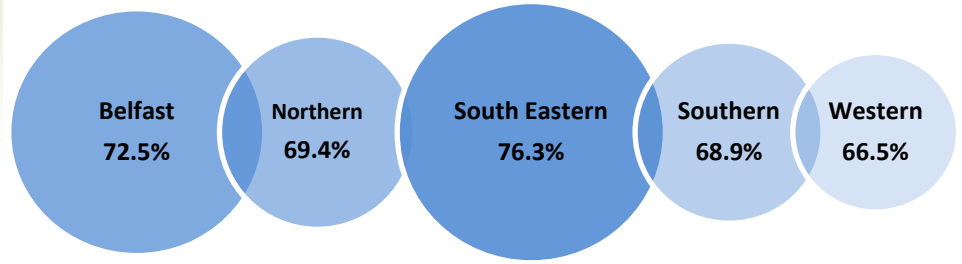
Almost two fifths (36.7%) of those waiting for a first consultant-led outpatient appointment were in the Belfast HSC Trust, with a further 21.8% in the South Eastern HSC Trust, 16.3% in the Southern HSC Trust, 13.0% in the Northern HSC Trust and 12.2% in the Western HSC Trust (Table 2a).

Nearly two thirds (62.1%, 164,097) of the 264,451 patients were waiting for a first outpatient appointment in one of the following specialties: Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT) (33,409); Trauma and Orthopaedic (T&O) Surgery (32,466); General Surgery (29,509); Ophthalmology (24,988); Gynaecology (15,619); Neurology (14,489) and General Medicine (13,617) (Table 3a).

Patients waiting more than 9 weeks at 30th June 2017

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

71.6%
of patients
were waiting longer
than 9 weeks



Percentage waiting over 9 weeks

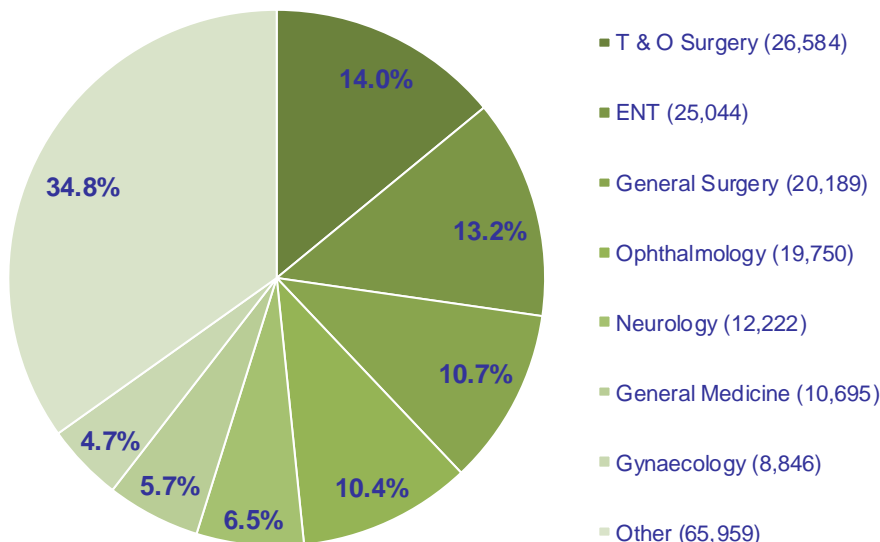
Source: CH3 Return

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 (71.6%, 189,289) of patients were waiting more than 9 weeks for a first consultant-led outpatient appointment at 30th June 2017, compared with 69.6% (176,276) at 31st March 2017 and 64.8% (146,167) at 30th June 2016 (Table 1).

At 30th June 2017, 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



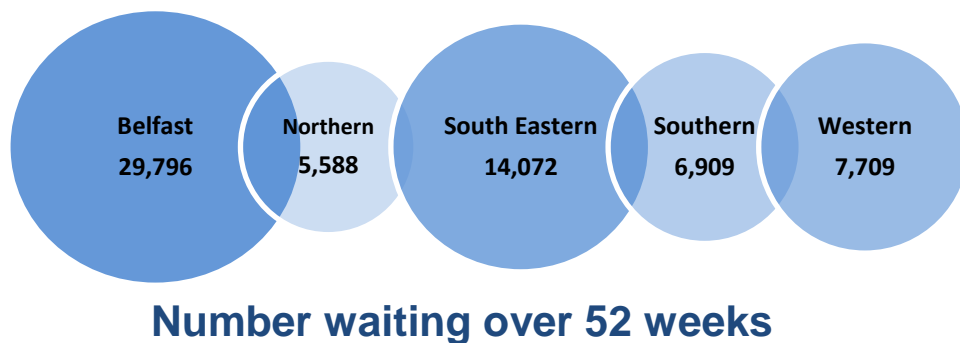
Just under two-thirds (65.2%, 123,330) of the 189,289 patients waiting more than 9 weeks for a first consultant-led outpatient appointment at 30th June 2017 were in one of the following specialties: Trauma and Orthopaedic (T&O) Surgery; Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT); General Surgery; Ophthalmology; Neurology; General Medicine and Gynaecology (Table 3a).

Source: CH3 Return

Patients waiting more than 52 weeks at 30th June 2017

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

64,074 patients were waiting longer than 52 weeks



Number waiting over 52 weeks

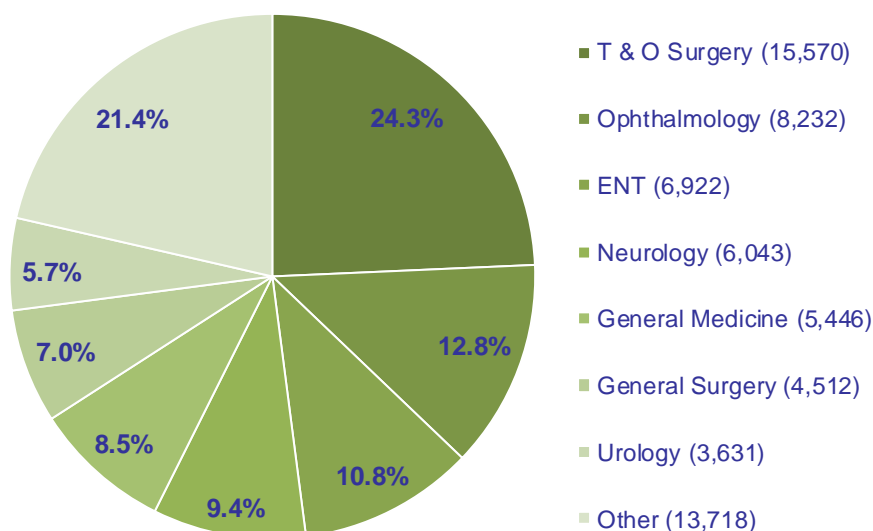
Source: CH3 Return

At 30th June 2017, 24.2% (64,074) of patients were waiting more than 52 weeks for a first consultant-led outpatient appointment, compared with 21.0% (53,113) at 31st March 2017, and 13.4% (30,170) at 30th June 2016 (Table 1).

At 30th June 2017, 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).

Almost a third (30.7%, 29,796) of patients in the Belfast HSC Trust were waiting longer than 52 weeks at 30th June 2017, 24.4% (14,072) in the South Eastern HSC Trust, 23.8% (7,709) in the Western HSC Trust, 16.3% (5,588) in the Northern HSC Trust and 16.0% (6,909) in the Southern HSC Trust (Table 2a).

Patients waiting more than 52 weeks by specialty



Source: CH3 Return

A total of 78.6% (50,356) of the 64,074 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; Ophthalmology; Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT); Neurology; General Medicine; General Surgery and Urology (Table 3a).

Completed waits for a first outpatient appointment commissioned by the Health Service during quarter ending June 2017

There were **117,737 first outpatient attendances**

commissioned by the Health Service



A **decrease of 6.3%** on the previous quarter

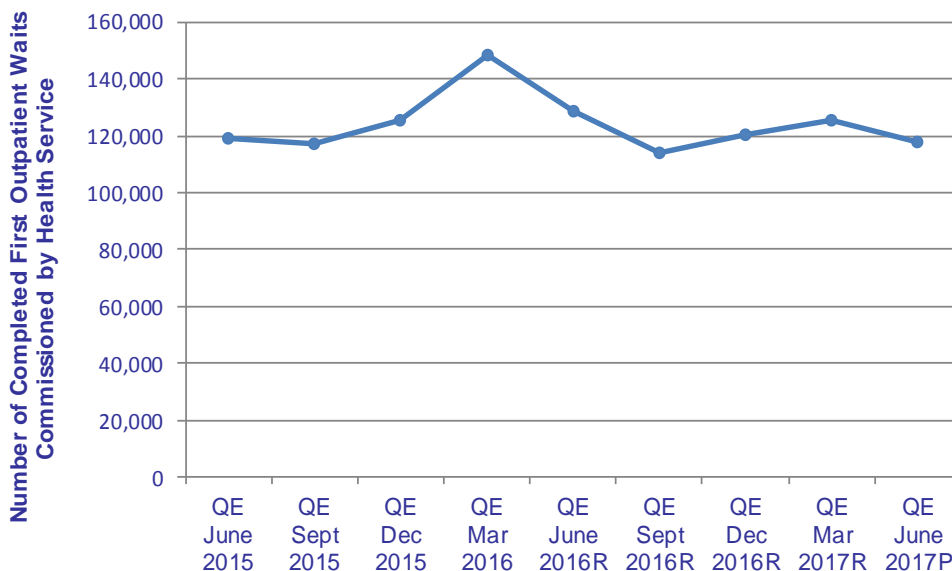


A **decrease of 8.3%** on the same quarter last year

Source: QOAR and IS1 Part 1 Returns

There were 117,170 attendances for a first consultant-led outpatient appointment in Health Service hospitals in Northern Ireland during the quarter ending June 2017. This was 5.5% (6,818) less than during the quarter ending March 2017 (123,988), and 7.9% (10,053) less than during the quarter ending June 2016 (127,223) (Table 4).

During the quarter ending June 2017, 567 Health Service patients attended a first outpatient appointment within the Independent Sector. This is less than a third of the number who attended during the quarter ending March 2017 (1,725), and half the number who attended in the same quarter last year (1,133) (Table 4).



Source: QOAR and IS1 Part 1 Returns

^PData is provisional

^RRevised figures

When the number of attendances commissioned by the Health Service, within the Independent Sector, during the quarter ending June 2017 (567) is combined with that for outpatients attending a first outpatient appointment in Health Service hospitals during the same period (117,170), provisional figures indicate that 117,737 outpatients attended a first appointment in Northern Ireland commissioned by the Health

Service (Table 4). This is a decrease of 6.3% (7,976) on the number seen during the quarter ending March 2017 (125,713), and 8.3% (10,619) less than during the quarter ending June 2016 (128,356).

Appendix 1: Tables

Table 1: Quarterly outpatient waiting lists – 30th June 2017¹

First Consultant-Led Outpatient Appointment	Current Quarter (30 th June 2017)	Previous Quarter (31 st Mar 2017)	Same Quarter Last Year (30 th June 2016)
Total Patients Waiting	264,451	253,093	225,593
Number waiting over 9 weeks	189,289	176,276	146,167
<i>Percentage waiting over 9 weeks</i>	71.6%	69.6%	64.8%
Number waiting over 52 weeks	64,074	53,113	30,170

Source: CH3 Return

¹Refer to Explanatory Notes 1–9 & 12-13

Table 2a: Number of patients waiting for a first consultant-led outpatient appointment by HSC Trust and weeks waiting – 30th June 2017¹

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	20,582	6,120	4,452	4,395	4,023	27,564	29,796	96,932
Northern	7,875	2,620	1,841	1,956	1,839	12,579	5,588	34,298
South Eastern	10,239	3,416	2,547	2,898	2,917	21,536	14,072	57,625
Southern	10,084	3,372	2,489	2,612	2,355	15,402	6,909	43,223
Western	8,376	2,478	1,748	1,710	1,559	8,793	7,709	32,373
Total	57,156	18,006	13,077	13,571	12,693	85,874	64,074	264,451

Source: CH3 Return

¹Refer to Explanatory Notes 1–9 & 12-13

Table 2b: Percentage of patients waiting for a first consultant-led outpatient appointment by HSC Trust and weeks waiting – 30th June 2017¹

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	21.2%	6.3%	4.6%	4.5%	4.2%	28.4%	30.7%
Northern	23.0%	7.6%	5.4%	5.7%	5.4%	36.7%	16.3%
South Eastern	17.8%	5.9%	4.4%	5.0%	5.1%	37.4%	24.4%
Southern	23.3%	7.8%	5.8%	6.0%	5.4%	35.6%	16.0%
Western	25.9%	7.7%	5.4%	5.3%	4.8%	27.2%	23.8%
Total	21.6%	6.8%	4.9%	5.1%	4.8%	32.5%	24.2%

Source: CH3 Return

¹Refer to Explanatory Notes 1–9 & 12-13

Table 3a: Number of patients waiting for a first consultant-led outpatient appointment by weeks waiting and specialty – 30th June 2017¹

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	6,096	2,269	1,603	1,829	1,802	12,888	6,922	33,409
T & O Surgery	4,421	1,461	1,136	911	906	8,061	15,570	32,466
General Surgery	7,249	2,071	1,500	1,655	1,652	10,870	4,512	29,509
Ophthalmology	3,979	1,259	951	1,044	1,007	8,516	8,232	24,988
Gynaecology	5,167	1,606	1,153	1,171	849	4,828	845	15,619
Neurology	1,691	576	484	566	535	4,594	6,043	14,489
General Medicine	2,287	635	443	461	453	3,892	5,446	13,617
Dermatology	4,591	1,359	872	757	668	3,933	830	13,010
Paediatrics	3,298	1,142	766	761	743	2,584	960	10,254
Rheumatology	1,612	689	465	516	424	3,238	3,059	10,003
Urology	1,809	497	366	398	288	2,601	3,631	9,590
Gastroenterology	1,551	488	412	493	479	3,648	2,112	9,183
Oral Surgery	1,368	453	433	481	517	3,783	1,954	8,989
Cardiology	3,075	947	587	614	482	2,104	710	8,519
Pain Management	1,157	461	371	402	489	3,511	956	7,347
Thoracic Medicine	1,668	544	452	475	426	3,079	542	7,186
Plastic Surgery	867	284	215	209	186	1,515	948	4,224
Geriatric Medicine	893	191	167	179	191	634	152	2,407
Restorative Dentistry	319	113	108	99	118	650	471	1,878
Other	4,058	961	593	550	478	945	179	7,764
All Specialties	57,156	18,006	13,077	13,571	12,693	85,874	64,074	264,451

Source: CH3 Return

¹Refer to Explanatory Notes 1–9 & 12-13

Table 3b: Percentage of patients waiting for a first consultant-led outpatient appointment by weeks waiting and specialty – 30th June 2017¹

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	18.2%	6.8%	4.8%	5.5%	5.4%	38.6%	20.7%
ENT	13.6%	4.5%	3.5%	2.8%	2.8%	24.8%	48.0%
General Surgery	24.6%	7.0%	5.1%	5.6%	5.6%	36.8%	15.3%
Ophthalmology	15.9%	5.0%	3.8%	4.2%	4.0%	34.1%	32.9%
Gynaecology	33.1%	10.3%	7.4%	7.5%	5.4%	30.9%	5.4%
Neurology	11.7%	4.0%	3.3%	3.9%	3.7%	31.7%	41.7%
General Medicine	16.8%	4.7%	3.3%	3.4%	3.3%	28.6%	40.0%
Dermatology	35.3%	10.4%	6.7%	5.8%	5.1%	30.2%	6.4%
Urology	32.2%	11.1%	7.5%	7.4%	7.2%	25.2%	9.4%
Paediatrics	16.1%	6.9%	4.6%	5.2%	4.2%	32.4%	30.6%
Rheumatology	18.9%	5.2%	3.8%	4.2%	3.0%	27.1%	37.9%
Gastroenterology	16.9%	5.3%	4.5%	5.4%	5.2%	39.7%	23.0%
Oral Surgery	15.2%	5.0%	4.8%	5.4%	5.8%	42.1%	21.7%
Cardiology	36.1%	11.1%	6.9%	7.2%	5.7%	24.7%	8.3%
Pain Management	15.7%	6.3%	5.0%	5.5%	6.7%	47.8%	13.0%
Thoracic Medicine	23.2%	7.6%	6.3%	6.6%	5.9%	42.8%	7.5%
Plastic Surgery	20.5%	6.7%	5.1%	4.9%	4.4%	35.9%	22.4%
Geriatric Medicine	37.1%	7.9%	6.9%	7.4%	7.9%	26.3%	6.3%
Restorative Dentistry	17.0%	6.0%	5.8%	5.3%	6.3%	34.6%	25.1%
Other	52.3%	12.4%	7.6%	7.1%	6.2%	12.2%	2.3%
All Specialties	21.6%	6.8%	4.9%	5.1%	4.8%	32.5%	24.2%

Source: CH3 Return

¹Refer to Explanatory Notes 1–9 & 12-13

Table 4: Number of completed waits for a first consultant-led outpatient appointment commissioned by the Health Service: QE June 2015 - QE June 2017²

Quarter Ending	Number of Completed First Outpatient Waits		
	Within Health Service Hospitals	Independent Sector*	Total Commissioned by Health Service
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 ^R	127,223	1,133	128,356
QE Sept 2016 ^R	113,682	526	114,208
QE Dec 2016 ^R	119,587	673	120,260
QE Mar 2017 ^R	123,988	1,725	125,713
QE June 2017 ^P	117,170	567	117,737

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 & 10–11

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-june-2017>
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 2018, 50% of patients should wait no longer than nine weeks for a first outpatient appointment, with no patient waiting longer than 52 weeks.
9. 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.
10. 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).
11. 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.
12. 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.

13. Figures relating to outpatient waiting times for the quarter ending 30th September 2017 will be released on Thursday 30th November 2017.

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

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