

INFORMATION  
ANALYSIS  
DIRECTORATE



# Northern Ireland Waiting Time Statistics: Inpatient and Day Case Waiting Times Quarter Ending December 2018



Department of  
**Health**  
An Roinn Sláinte  
Máinnystrie O Poustie  
[www.health-ni.gov.uk](http://www.health-ni.gov.uk)

# Reader Information

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**Purpose:** This statistical release presents information on waiting times for admission for either inpatient or day case treatment 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, 55% of patients should wait no longer than 13 weeks for inpatient/day case treatment, 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 inpatient and day case admissions in HSC Trusts at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2018. Data are presented by HSC Trust, specialty and time band. It also includes inpatient and day case activity commissioned by the Health Service during the quarter ending December 2018.

**Statistical Quality:** The ‘*Inpatient and Day Case 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-inpatient-waiting-times-December-2018>

**Internet:** <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/articles/inpatient-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

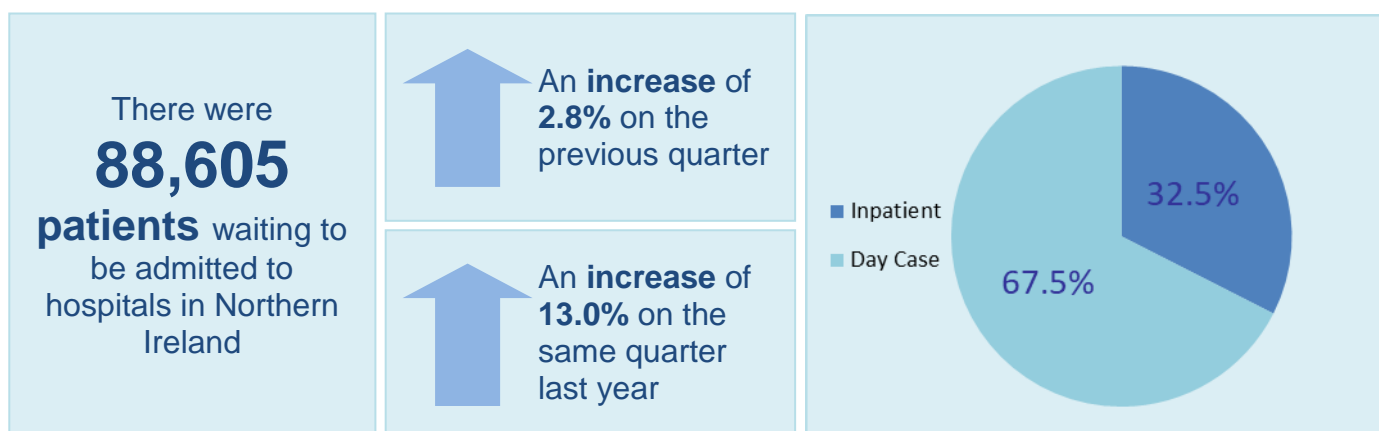
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**By March 2019, 55% of patients should wait no longer than 13 weeks for inpatient/day case treatment, with no patient waiting longer than 52 weeks.**

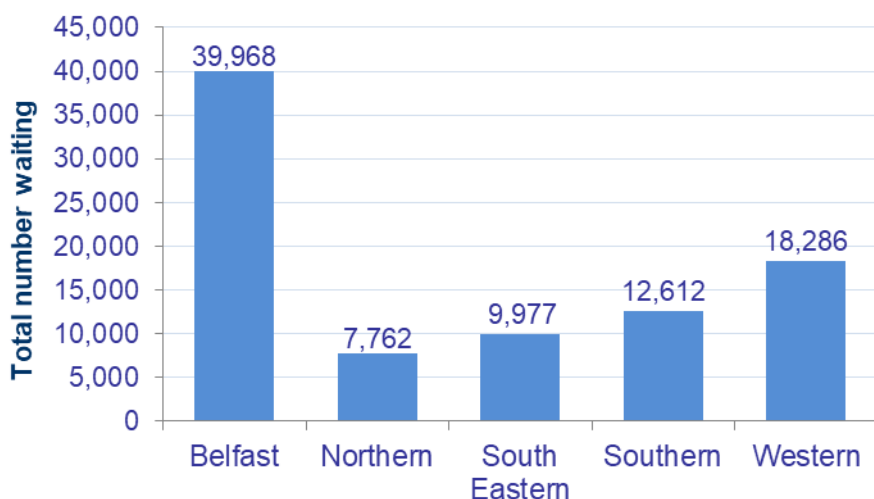
## Total number of patients waiting at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2018



Source: DoH Inpatient Waiting Times Dataset

At 31<sup>st</sup> December 2018, a total of 88,605 patients were waiting to be admitted to hospitals in Northern Ireland, 2.8% (2,386) more than at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2018 (86,219), and 13.0% (10,165) more than at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2017 (78,440) (Table 1).

Almost one third (32.5%, 28,782) of those waiting for admission at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2018 were waiting for an inpatient admission, with the remaining 67.5% (59,823) waiting for a day case admission (Table 1).



A number of inpatient and day case 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 that will be providing treatment, users should be cautious in how they use these data (see explanatory note 11).

Source: DoH Inpatient Waiting Times Dataset

Over two fifths (45.1%) were waiting to be admitted in the Belfast HSC Trust, with a further 20.6% waiting in the Western HSC Trust, 14.2% in the Southern HSC Trust, 11.3% in the South Eastern HSC Trust and 8.8% in the Northern HSC Trust (Table 2a).

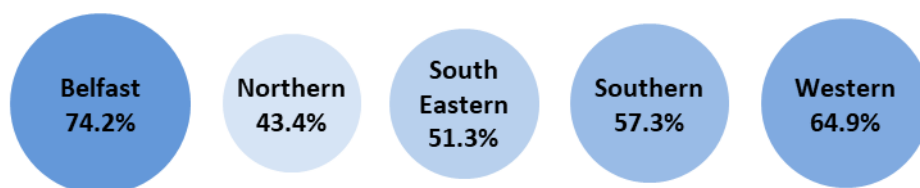
Of the 88,605 patients waiting for admission, four fifths (80.4%, 71,238) were in one of the following specialties: Trauma and Orthopaedic (T&O) Surgery (16,846); General Surgery (16,707); Ophthalmology (9,964); Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT) (9,296); Urology (8,177), Gynaecology (5,376) and Gastroenterology (4,872) (Table 3a).

## Patients waiting more than 13 weeks at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2018

By March 2019, 55% of patients should wait no longer than 13 weeks for inpatient/day case treatment

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

**64.6%**  
of patients were waiting longer than 13 weeks



### Percentage waiting over 13 weeks

Source: DoH Inpatient Waiting Times Dataset

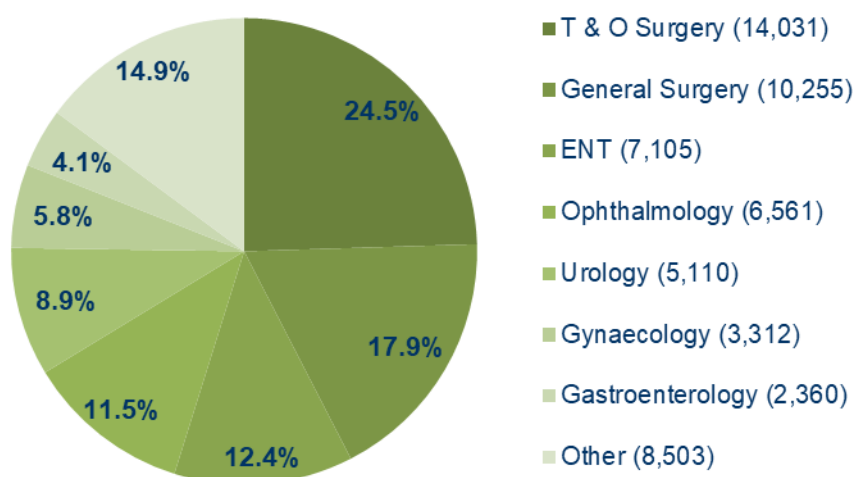
Achievement of the 13 week target requires that less than 45% of patients should be waiting over 13 weeks for inpatient or day case admission.

At 31<sup>st</sup> December 2018, 64.6% (57,237) of patients were waiting more than 13 weeks to be admitted for treatment, compared with 66.8% (57,617) at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2018 and 61.2% (48,003) at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2017 (Table 1).

At 31<sup>st</sup> December 2018, the 13 week element of the target was not achieved by Northern Ireland as a whole (Table 2a). The Northern HSC Trust did meet this element of the target, however, data users should be aware that many inpatient and day case services are not provided at every HSC Trust (see explanatory note 11).

Of patients waiting for an inpatient admission, four-fifths (79.0%, 22,725) were waiting over 13 weeks. This is compared with 57.7% (34,512) waiting over 13 weeks for a day case admission (Table 1).

### Patients waiting over 13 weeks by specialty



Source: DoH Inpatient Waiting Times Dataset

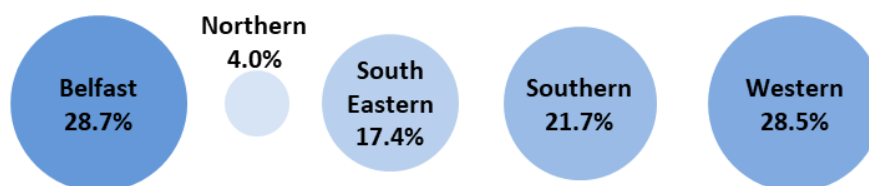
Over four-fifths (85.1%, 48,734) of the 57,237 patients waiting more than 13 weeks at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2018 were in one of the following specialties: Trauma and Orthopaedic (T&O) Surgery; General Surgery; Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT); Ophthalmology; Urology; Gynaecology and Gastroenterology (Table 3a).

## Patients waiting more than 52 weeks at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2018

By March 2019, no patient should wait longer than 52 weeks for inpatient/day case treatment

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

**21,477**  
patients were waiting longer than 52 weeks



Percentage waiting over 13 weeks

Source: DoH Inpatient Waiting Times Dataset

Achievement of the 52 week target requires that no patient should be waiting over 52 weeks for inpatient or day case admission.

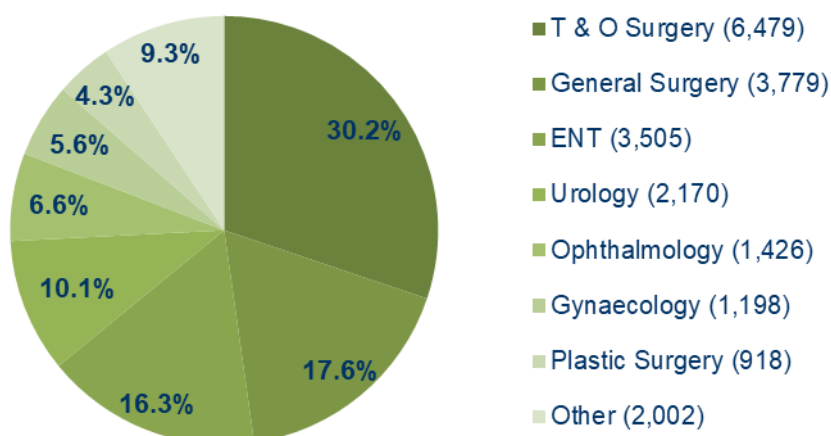
At 31<sup>st</sup> December 2018, 24.2% (21,477) of patients were waiting more than 52 weeks for either an inpatient or day case admission, compared with 22.9% (19,715) at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2018, and 19.1% (14,979) at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2017 (Table 1).

At 31<sup>st</sup> December 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 many inpatient and day case services are not provided at every HSC Trust (see explanatory note 11).

Over a quarter of patients in both the Belfast (28.7%, 11,488) and Western (28.5%, 5,208) HSC Trusts were waiting longer than 52 weeks at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2018, 21.7% (2,735) in the Southern HSC Trust, 17.4% (1,737) in the South Eastern HSC Trust, and 4.0% (309) in the Northern HSC Trust (Table 2a).

Of those waiting more than 52 weeks, 10,958 were waiting for an inpatient admission and 10,519 were waiting for a day case admission (Table 1).

### Patients waiting over 52 weeks by speciality



Source: DoH Inpatient Waiting Times Dataset

Almost all (90.7%, 19,475) of the 21,477 patients waiting more than 52 weeks at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2018 were in one of the following specialties: Trauma and Orthopaedic (T&O) Surgery; General Surgery; Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT); Urology; Ophthalmology; Gynaecology and Plastic Surgery (Table 3a).

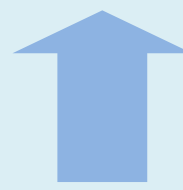
## Completed waits for inpatient and day case activity during quarter ending 31<sup>st</sup> December 2018

There were  
**47,449**

admissions for inpatient and day case treatment in Northern Ireland commissioned by the Health Service



An **increase** of 9.9% on the previous quarter

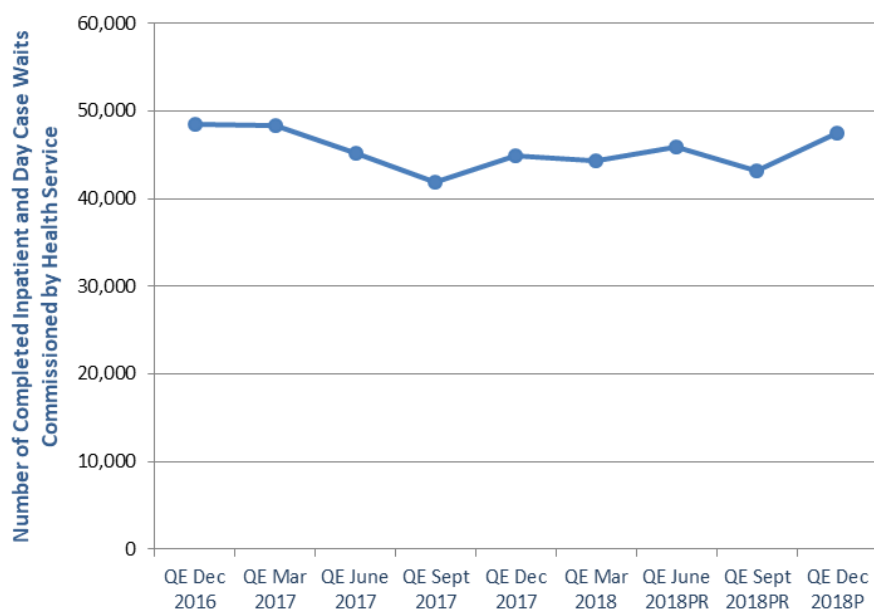


An **increase** of 5.7% on the same quarter last year

Source: Hospital Inpatient System & IS1 Part 2 Return

A total of 45,153 patients were admitted to Health Service hospitals in Northern Ireland during the quarter ending 31<sup>st</sup> December 2018, 7.4% (3,092) more than during the quarter ending 30<sup>th</sup> September 2018 (42,061) and 1.8% (802) more than during the quarter ending 31<sup>st</sup> December 2017 (44,351) (Table 4).

During the quarter ending 31<sup>st</sup> December 2018, 2,296 patients received inpatient or day case treatment commissioned by the Health Service within the Independent Sector, more than double the number seen during the quarter ending 30<sup>th</sup> September 2018 (1,126), and over four times the number during the same quarter last year (545) (Table 4).



Source: Hospital Inpatient System & IS1 Part 2 Return

<sup>P</sup> Data are currently provisional

<sup>R</sup> Revised figures

When the number of completed inpatient and day case waits within the Independent Sector during the quarter ending 31<sup>st</sup> December 2018 (2,296) is combined with those treated in Health Service hospitals during the same period (45,153), provisional figures indicate that 47,449 inpatients and day cases received treatment in Northern Ireland commissioned by the Health Service. This was a 9.9% (4,262)

increase in the number of completed waits commissioned by the Health Service between the quarter ending September 2018 (43,187) and the quarter ending December 2018 (47,449) and an increase of 5.7% (2,553) compared to quarter ending December 2017 (44,896) (Table 4).

## Appendix 1: Tables

**Table 1: Quarterly inpatient and day case waiting lists – 31<sup>st</sup> December 2018<sup>1</sup>**

Type of Admission		Current Quarter (31 <sup>st</sup> Dec 18)	Previous Quarter (30 <sup>th</sup> Sep 2018)	Same Quarter Last Year (31 <sup>st</sup> Dec 2017)
<b>Inpatient</b>	Total Patients Waiting	28,782	27,749	25,460
	Number waiting over 13 weeks	22,725	22,194	19,243
	<i>Percentage waiting over 13 weeks</i>	79.0%	80.0%	75.6%
	Number waiting over 52 weeks	10,958	10,128	8,180
<b>Day Case</b>	Total Patients Waiting	59,823	58,470	52,980
	Number waiting over 13 weeks	34,512	35,423	28,760
	<i>Percentage waiting over 13 weeks</i>	57.7%	60.6%	54.3%
	Number waiting over 52 weeks	10,519	9,587	6,799
<b>All Admissions</b>	Total Patients Waiting	88,605	86,219	78,440
	Number waiting over 13 weeks	57,237	57,617	48,003
	<i>Percentage waiting over 13 weeks</i>	64.6%	66.8%	61.2%
	Number waiting over 52 weeks	21,477	19,715	14,979

Source: DoH Inpatient Waiting Times Dataset

<sup>1</sup>Refer to Explanatory Notes 1–14 & 18-19

**Table 2a: Number of patients waiting for inpatient and day case admissions by HSC Trust and weeks waiting – 31<sup>st</sup> December 2018<sup>1</sup>**

HSC Trust	Patients Waiting for Admission by Weeks Waiting						Total Waiting for Admission
	0 - 6	>6 - 13	>13 - 21	>21 - 26	>26-52	>52	
Belfast	4,891	5,412	4,597	2,244	11,336	11,488	39,968
Northern	2,767	1,630	1,207	556	1,293	309	7,762
South Eastern	2,761	2,101	1,355	508	1,515	1,737	9,977
Southern	3,056	2,325	1,379	566	2,551	2,735	12,612
Western	3,435	2,990	2,109	820	3,724	5,208	18,286
<b>Total</b>	<b>16,910</b>	<b>14,458</b>	<b>10,647</b>	<b>4,694</b>	<b>20,419</b>	<b>21,477</b>	<b>88,605</b>

Source: DoH Inpatient Waiting Times Dataset

<sup>1</sup>Refer to Explanatory Notes 1–14 & 18-19

**Table 2b: Percentage of patients waiting for inpatient and day case admissions by HSC Trust and weeks waiting – 31<sup>st</sup> December 2018<sup>1</sup>**

HSC Trust	Patients Waiting for Admission by Weeks Waiting					
	0 - 6	>6 - 13	>13 - 21	>21 - 26	>26-52	>52
Belfast	12.2%	13.5%	11.5%	5.6%	28.4%	28.7%
Northern	35.6%	21.0%	15.6%	7.2%	16.7%	4.0%
South Eastern	27.7%	21.1%	13.6%	5.1%	15.2%	17.4%
Southern	24.2%	18.4%	10.9%	4.5%	20.2%	21.7%
Western	18.8%	16.4%	11.5%	4.5%	20.4%	28.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>19.1%</b>	<b>16.3%</b>	<b>12.0%</b>	<b>5.3%</b>	<b>23.0%</b>	<b>24.2%</b>

Source: DoH Inpatient Waiting Times Dataset

<sup>1</sup>Refer to Explanatory Notes 1–14 & 18-19



**Table 3a: Number of patients waiting for inpatient and day case admissions by weeks waiting and specialty – 31<sup>st</sup> December 2018<sup>1</sup>**

Specialty	Patients Waiting for Admission by Weeks Waiting						Total Waiting for Admission
	0 - 6	>6 - 13	>13 - 21	>21 - 26	>26-52	>52	
General Surgery	3,680	2,772	1,963	924	3,589	3,779	16,707
T & O Surgery	892	1,923	1,701	856	4,995	6,479	16,846
Ophthalmology	1,596	1,807	1,555	648	2,932	1,426	9,964
ENT	1,079	1,112	1,012	449	2,139	3,505	9,296
Urology	1,810	1,257	880	374	1,686	2,170	8,177
Gynaecology	1,087	977	683	317	1,114	1,198	5,376
Gastroenterology	1,684	828	605	322	1,165	268	4,872
General Medicine	1,753	1,135	625	165	434	198	4,310
Cardiology	678	620	360	135	330	73	2,196
Pain Management	262	317	332	165	610	522	2,208
Plastic Surgery	391	314	277	85	468	918	2,453
Oral Surgery	240	187	129	65	230	201	1,052
Paediatric Surgery	118	145	93	37	205	259	857
GP Other	385	298	49	14	21	0	767
Dermatology	352	158	76	37	102	4	729
Paediatrics	87	74	58	37	123	88	467
Neurology	106	75	64	12	47	89	393
Rheumatology	171	124	20	0	7	51	373
Neurosurgery	59	60	38	19	71	50	297
Other	480	275	127	33	151	199	1,265
<b>All Specialties</b>	<b>16,910</b>	<b>14,458</b>	<b>10,647</b>	<b>4,694</b>	<b>20,419</b>	<b>21,477</b>	<b>88,605</b>

Source: DoH Inpatient Waiting Times Dataset

<sup>1</sup>Refer to Explanatory Notes 1–14 & 18-19

**Table 3b: Percentage of patients waiting for inpatient and day case admissions by weeks waiting and speciality – 31<sup>st</sup> December 2018<sup>1</sup>**

Specialty	Percentage of Patients Waiting for Admission by Weeks Waiting					
	0 - 6	>6 - 13	>13 - 21	>21 - 26	>26-52	>52
General Surgery	22.0%	16.6%	11.7%	5.5%	21.5%	22.6%
T & O Surgery	5.3%	11.4%	10.1%	5.1%	29.7%	38.5%
Ophthalmology	16.0%	18.1%	15.6%	6.5%	29.4%	14.3%
ENT	11.6%	12.0%	10.9%	4.8%	23.0%	37.7%
Urology	22.1%	15.4%	10.8%	4.6%	20.6%	26.5%
Gynaecology	20.2%	18.2%	12.7%	5.9%	20.7%	22.3%
Gastroenterology	34.6%	17.0%	12.4%	6.6%	23.9%	5.5%
General Medicine	40.7%	26.3%	14.5%	3.8%	10.1%	4.6%
Cardiology	30.9%	28.2%	16.4%	6.1%	15.0%	3.3%
Pain Management	11.9%	14.4%	15.0%	7.5%	27.6%	23.6%
Plastic Surgery	15.9%	12.8%	11.3%	3.5%	19.1%	37.4%
Oral Surgery	22.8%	17.8%	12.3%	6.2%	21.9%	19.1%
Paediatric Surgery	13.8%	16.9%	10.9%	4.3%	23.9%	30.2%
GP Other	50.2%	38.9%	6.4%	1.8%	2.7%	0.0%
Dermatology	48.3%	21.7%	10.4%	5.1%	14.0%	0.5%
Paediatrics	18.6%	15.8%	12.4%	7.9%	26.3%	18.8%
Neurology	27.0%	19.1%	16.3%	3.1%	12.0%	22.6%
Rheumatology	45.8%	33.2%	5.4%	0.0%	1.9%	13.7%
Neurosurgery	19.9%	20.2%	12.8%	6.4%	23.9%	16.8%
Other	37.9%	21.7%	10.0%	2.6%	11.9%	15.7%
<b>All Specialties</b>	<b>19.1%</b>	<b>16.3%</b>	<b>12.0%</b>	<b>5.3%</b>	<b>23.0%</b>	<b>24.2%</b>

Source: DoH Inpatient Waiting Times Dataset

<sup>1</sup>Refer to Explanatory Notes 1–14 & 18-19

**Table 4: Number of completed inpatient and day case waits commissioned by the Health Service: QE December 2016 - QE December 2018<sup>2</sup>**

Quarter Ending	Number of Completed Inpatient and Day Case Waits		
	Within Health Service Hospitals	Independent Sector*	Total Commissioned by Health Service
QE Dec 2016	45,843	2,589	48,432
QE Mar 2017	44,541	3,719	48,260
QE June 2017	44,641	599	45,240
QE Sept 2017	41,467	339	41,806
QE Dec 2017	44,351	545	44,896
QE Mar 2018	41,586	2,793	44,379
QE June 2018 <sup>PR</sup>	44,721	1,128	45,849
QE Sept 2018 <sup>PR</sup>	42,061	1,126	43,187
QE Dec 2018 <sup>P</sup>	45,153	2,296	47,449

Source: Hospital Inpatient System & IS1 Part 2 Return

<sup>P</sup>Data are currently provisional

<sup>R</sup>Data has been revised

\*Not National Statistics

<sup>2</sup>Refer to Explanatory Notes 1, 4 & 15-19

## Appendix 2: Explanatory Notes

1. The sources for the data contained in this release are the DoH Inpatient Waiting Times Dataset, Hospital Inpatient System and IS1 Part 2 Return. These returns collect information from Health and Social Care Trusts on a quarterly basis.

2. The '*Inpatient and Day Case 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-inpatient-waiting-times-December-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 inpatient and day case waiting times have been published in spreadsheet format (CSV), split by HSC Trust, Specialty, Programme of Care and Intended Management of the patient (i.e. Inpatient Admission or Day Case), in order to aid secondary analysis. These data are available at <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/articles/inpatient-waiting-times-December-2018>.

4. Information includes patients living outside Northern Ireland and privately funded patients waiting for treatment in Health Service hospitals in Northern Ireland.

5. Inpatient and day case waiting list data comprise the number of patients waiting for inpatient admission to hospital and the number of patients waiting for day case treatment.

6. Inpatient admissions can include both (a) patients admitted electively with the expectation that they will remain in hospital for at least one night, and (b) non-elective admissions (e.g. emergency admissions). A patient who is admitted with either of the above intentions, but who leaves hospital for any reason without staying overnight, is still counted as an inpatient admission.

7. Day Cases are patients admitted electively during the course of a day with the intention of receiving care who do not require the use of a hospital bed overnight and who return home as scheduled. If this original intention is not fulfilled and the patient stays overnight, such a patient is counted as an inpatient admission.

8. The inpatient and day case waiting list figures do not include:

- Patients admitted as emergency cases;
- Outpatients;

- Patients undergoing a planned programme of treatment e.g. a series of admissions for chemotherapy;
- Patients waiting for admission as a regular day or night attender
- Maternity (specialties 510 and 520);
- Patients currently receiving inpatient treatment in hospitals who are included on other waiting lists;
- Patients who are temporarily suspended from waiting lists.

9. Waiting time begins from the date the clinician decided to admit the patient. 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 the DNA.

10. 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.

11. The Ministerial target, for inpatient and day case waiting times, as set out in the Health and Social Care (Commissioning Plan) Direction states that, by June 2019, at least 55% of patients should wait no longer than 13 weeks for inpatient or day case treatment, with no patient waiting longer than 52 weeks.

12. A number of inpatient and day case 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. 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.

13. For Tables 2a, 2b, 3a and 3b, each inpatient and day case waiting time band relates to the number of completed weeks a patient has been waiting for admission for treatment. 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 >6-13 (greater than 6 weeks but waiting no longer than 13 weeks)

week time band. Patients waiting 'more than 13 weeks' includes all patients in the >13-21, >21–26, >26-52 and >52 time bands. Patients waiting 'more than 52 weeks' includes all patients in the >52 time band.

14. Patients waiting for day case endoscopies are included within both inpatient and diagnostic waiting times; as such, figures should not be added together.

15. The total number of completed inpatient waits within HSC hospitals each quarter is sourced from the Hospital Inpatient System. During the financial year, data from the Hospital Inpatient System will be marked as provisional. This is because information on inpatient admissions continuously improves during the year before being finalised. Consequently, quarterly information from the Hospital Inpatient System, for the most recent financial year, will be revised on a quarterly basis.

16. The number of completed inpatient waits within HSC hospitals each quarter do not include:

- Elective planned patients
- Emergency patients
- Maternity (specialties 510 and 520)
- Private patients
- Amenity patients
- Mental Health and Learning Disability patients
- Others (including transfers)

17. The numbers of patients who received inpatient treatment, commissioned by the Health Service, in the Independent Sector, are provided by the HSC Board. 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 inpatient waits during each quarter.

18. 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 annual cost to data providers of compliance with HIB's requirements for this publication, based on HSC salary costs, was £1,670.

19. Figures relating to inpatient and day case waiting times for the quarter ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019 will be released on Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> May 2019.

**Further information on Inpatient and Day Case 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](mailto:statistics@health-ni.gov.uk)

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