

INFORMATION  
ANALYSIS  
DIRECTORATE



# Northern Ireland Waiting Time Statistics: Outpatient Waiting Times Quarter Ending June 2016



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 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 30<sup>th</sup> 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-june-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, academics, and Health & Social Care stakeholders, the media and general public.

**Price:** Free

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The Ministerial target for outpatient waiting times states that, 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 30<sup>th</sup> June 2016

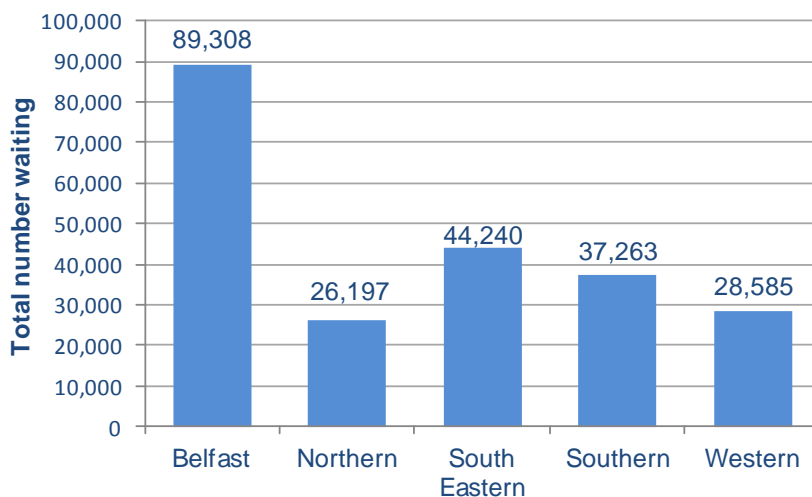
There were  
**225,593 patients**  
waiting for a first outpatient  
appointment in Northern  
Ireland

An **increase of 4.9%**  
on the previous quarter

An **increase of 6.2%** on  
the same quarter last year.

Source: CH3 Return

At 30<sup>th</sup> June 2016, a total of 225,593 people were waiting for a first consultant-led outpatient appointment in Northern Ireland, 4.9% (10,442) more than at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016 (215,151), and 6.2% (13,151) more than at 30<sup>th</sup> June 2015 (212,442) (Table 1).



Source: CH3 Return

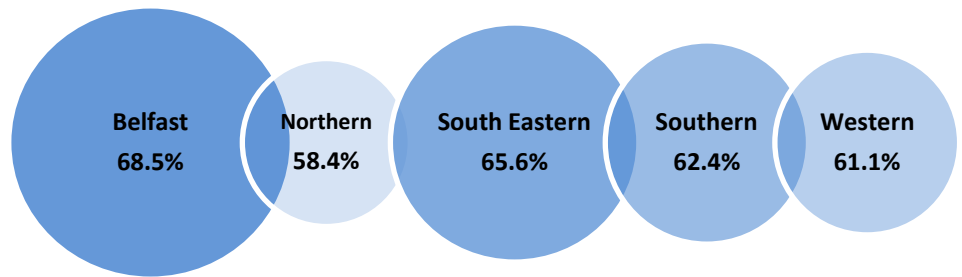
Almost two fifths (39.6%) of those waiting for a first consultant-led outpatient appointment were in the Belfast HSC Trust, with a further 19.6% waiting in the South Eastern HSC Trust, 16.5% in the Southern HSC Trust, 12.7% in the Western HSC Trust and 11.6% in the Northern HSC Trust (Table 2a).

Nearly two thirds (64.1%, 144,659) of the 225,593 patients waiting for a first outpatient appointment were within the following seven specialties: Trauma and Orthopaedic (T&O) Surgery (30,401); Ear, Nose and Throat (28,263); General Surgery (28,205); Ophthalmology (19,784); Gynaecology (14,987); General Medicine (11,904) and Neurology (11,115) (Table 3a).

## Patients waiting more than 9 weeks at 30<sup>th</sup> June 2016

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

**64.8%**  
of patients  
were waiting longer  
than 9 weeks



### Percentage waiting over 9 weeks

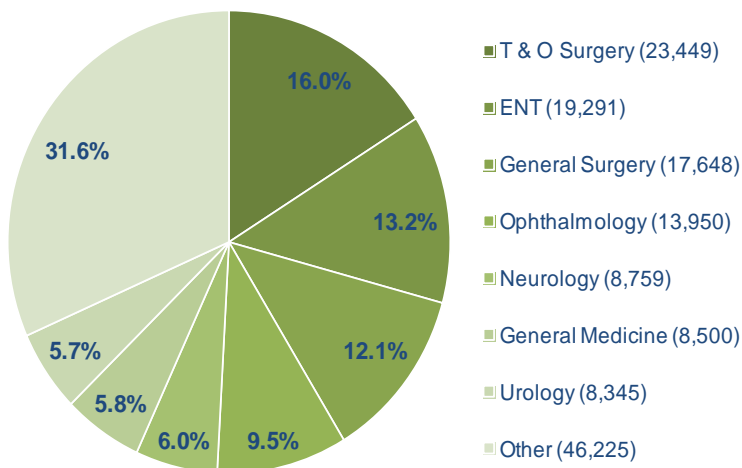
Source: CH3 Return

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.

At the end of June 2016, 64.8% (146,167) of patients were waiting more than 9 weeks for a first consultant-led outpatient appointment, compared with 63.2% (136,036) at the end of March 2016 and 60.8% (129,224) at the end of June 2015 (Table 1).

At 30<sup>th</sup> June 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



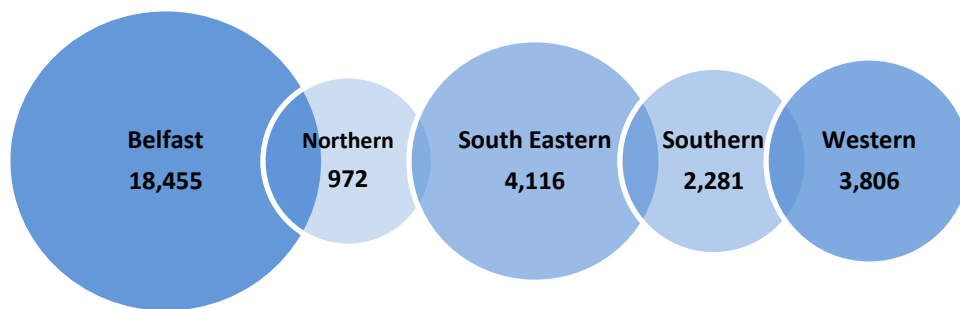
A total of 68.4% (99,942) of the 146,167 patients waiting more than 9 weeks for a first consultant-led outpatient appointment at 30<sup>th</sup> June 2016 were within the following seven specialties: Trauma and Orthopaedic (T&O) Surgery; General Surgery; Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT); Ophthalmology, Neurology; General Medicine and Urology (Table 3a).

Source: CH3 Return

## Patients waiting more than 52 weeks at 30<sup>th</sup> June 2016

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

**30,170**  
patients  
were waiting longer  
than 52 weeks



Number waiting over 52 weeks

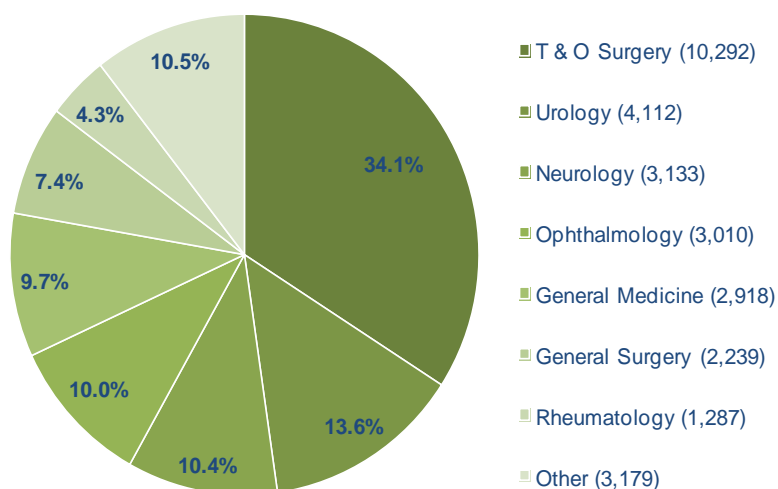
Source: CH3 Return

At the end of June 2016, over one in ten patients (13.4%, 30,170) of patients were waiting more than 52 weeks for a first consultant-led outpatient appointment. This is an increase of 23.3% (5,702) compared with the end of March 2016 (24,468), and almost three times the number waiting at the end of June 2015 (10,143) (Table 1).

At 30<sup>th</sup> June 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).

The proportion of patients waiting longer than 52 weeks at 30<sup>th</sup> June 2016 was 20.7% (18,455) in the Belfast HSC Trust, 13.3% (3,806) in the Western HSC Trust, 9.3% (4,116) in the South Eastern HSC Trust, 7.6% (2,821) in the Southern HSC Trust and 3.7% (972) in the Northern HSC Trust (Table 2a).

Patients waiting more than 52 weeks by specialty



A total of 89.5% (26,991) of the 30,170 patients waiting more than 52 weeks for a first consultant-led outpatient appointment were within the following seven specialties: Trauma and Orthopaedic (T&O) Surgery; Urology; Neurology; Ophthalmology; General Medicine; General Surgery and Rheumatology (Table 3a).

Source: CH3 Return

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

There were  
**128,379 first outpatient attendances**

commissioned by the Health Service



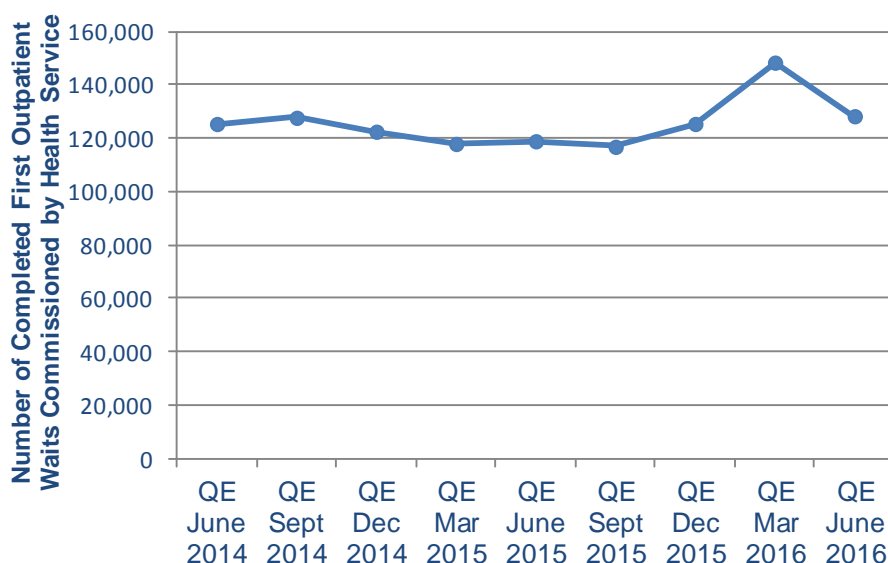
A **decrease** of **13.5%** on the previous quarter



An **increase** of **7.9%** on the same quarter last year

Source: QOAR and IS1 Part 1 Returns

During the quarter ending June 2016, there were 127,242 attendances for a first consultant-led outpatient appointment in Health Service hospitals in Northern Ireland, 2.0% (2,529) more than during quarter ending March 2016 (124,713), and 7.2% (8,503) more than during quarter ending June 2015 (118,739) (Table 4).



During the quarter ending June 2016, 1,137 Health Service patients attended a first outpatient appointment within the Independent Sector. This is a significant decrease on the quarter ending March 2016 (23,763) but an increase on the same quarter in the previous year (251) (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 June 2016 (1,137) is combined with that for outpatients attending a first outpatient appointment in Health Service hospitals during the same period (127,242), it is estimated that approximately 128,379 outpatients attended a first appointment in Northern Ireland for an assessment commissioned by the Health Service (Table 4). This was a decrease of 13.5% (20,097) on the number seen during the quarter ending March 2016 (148,476), and 7.9% more (9,389) than during the quarter ending June 2015 (118,990).

## Appendix 1: Tables

**Table 1: Quarterly outpatient waiting lists – 30<sup>th</sup> June 2016<sup>1</sup>**

First Consultant-Led Outpatient Appointment	Current Quarter (30 <sup>th</sup> June 2016)	Previous Quarter (31 <sup>st</sup> March 2016)	Same Quarter Last Year (30 <sup>th</sup> June 2015)
Total Patients Waiting	225,593	215,151	212,442
Number waiting over 9 weeks	146,167	136,036	129,224
<i>Percentage waiting over 9 weeks</i>	64.8%	63.2%	60.8%
Number waiting over 52 weeks	30,170	24,468	10,143

Source: CH3 Return

<sup>1</sup>Refer 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 – 30<sup>th</sup> June 2016<sup>1</sup>**

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	21,242	6,918	5,517	3,412	4,173	29,591	18,455	89,308
Northern	8,276	2,635	2,327	1,459	1,822	8,706	972	26,197
South Eastern	11,325	3,896	3,510	2,627	3,035	15,731	4,116	44,240
Southern	10,482	3,539	3,184	2,267	2,675	12,295	2,821	37,263
Western	8,664	2,449	2,341	1,444	1,516	8,365	3,806	28,585
<b>Total</b>	<b>59,989</b>	<b>19,437</b>	<b>16,879</b>	<b>11,209</b>	<b>13,221</b>	<b>74,688</b>	<b>30,170</b>	<b>225,593</b>

Source: CH3 Return

<sup>1</sup>Refer 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 – 30<sup>th</sup> June 2016<sup>1</sup>**

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	23.8%	7.7%	6.2%	3.8%	4.7%	33.1%	20.7%
Northern	31.6%	10.1%	8.9%	5.6%	7.0%	33.2%	3.7%
South Eastern	25.6%	8.8%	7.9%	5.9%	6.9%	35.6%	9.3%
Southern	28.1%	9.5%	8.5%	6.1%	7.2%	33.0%	7.6%
Western	30.3%	8.6%	8.2%	5.1%	5.3%	29.3%	13.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>26.6%</b>	<b>8.6%</b>	<b>7.5%</b>	<b>5.0%</b>	<b>5.9%</b>	<b>33.1%</b>	<b>13.4%</b>

Source: CH3 Return

<sup>1</sup>Refer 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 – 30<sup>th</sup> June 2016<sup>1</sup>**

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	5,380	1,572	1,312	824	1,057	9,964	10,292	30,401
ENT	6,584	2,388	2,418	1,740	2,188	12,334	611	28,263
General Surgery	8,063	2,494	2,353	1,599	1,936	9,521	2,239	28,205
Ophthalmology	4,435	1,399	1,243	922	1,068	7,707	3,010	19,784
Gynaecology	5,069	1,751	1,614	984	1,176	4,353	40	14,987
General Medicine	2,559	845	759	439	532	3,852	2,918	11,904
Neurology	1,693	663	610	472	546	3,998	3,133	11,115
Urology	1,757	528	359	302	339	3,233	4,112	10,630
Dermatology	4,946	1,436	964	592	518	926	27	9,409
Paediatrics	3,233	1,026	751	476	537	1,569	578	8,170
Rheumatology	1,787	615	546	377	420	2,914	1,287	7,946
Gastroenterology	1,657	563	506	367	421	3,124	764	7,402
Cardiology	3,041	827	600	351	423	2,012	147	7,401
Oral Surgery	1,372	600	514	366	455	1,941	421	5,669
Thoracic Medicine	1,411	554	559	344	426	2,160	162	5,616
Pain Management	1,273	554	614	380	482	1,930	13	5,246
Plastic Surgery	726	275	266	192	187	1,033	5	2,684
Endocrinology	554	178	112	69	81	479	215	1,688
Geriatric Medicine	795	199	160	97	114	280	19	1,664
Other	3,654	970	619	316	315	1,358	177	7,409
<b>All Specialties</b>	<b>59,989</b>	<b>19,437</b>	<b>16,879</b>	<b>11,209</b>	<b>13,221</b>	<b>74,688</b>	<b>30,170</b>	<b>225,593</b>

Source: CH3 Return

<sup>1</sup>Refer 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 – 30<sup>th</sup> June 2016<sup>1</sup>**

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	17.7%	5.2%	4.3%	2.7%	3.5%	32.8%	33.9%
ENT	23.3%	8.4%	8.6%	6.2%	7.7%	43.6%	2.2%
General Surgery	28.6%	8.8%	8.3%	5.7%	6.9%	33.8%	7.9%
Ophthalmology	22.4%	7.1%	6.3%	4.7%	5.4%	39.0%	15.2%
Gynaecology	33.8%	11.7%	10.8%	6.6%	7.8%	29.0%	0.3%
General Medicine	21.5%	7.1%	6.4%	3.7%	4.5%	32.4%	24.5%
Neurology	15.2%	6.0%	5.5%	4.2%	4.9%	36.0%	28.2%
Urology	16.5%	5.0%	3.4%	2.8%	3.2%	30.4%	38.7%
Dermatology	52.6%	15.3%	10.2%	6.3%	5.5%	9.8%	0.3%
Paediatrics	39.6%	12.6%	9.2%	5.8%	6.6%	19.2%	7.1%
Rheumatology	22.5%	7.7%	6.9%	4.7%	5.3%	36.7%	16.2%
Gastroenterology	22.4%	7.6%	6.8%	5.0%	5.7%	42.2%	10.3%
Cardiology	41.1%	11.2%	8.1%	4.7%	5.7%	27.2%	2.0%
Oral Surgery	24.2%	10.6%	9.1%	6.5%	8.0%	34.2%	7.4%
Thoracic Medicine	25.1%	9.9%	10.0%	6.1%	7.6%	38.5%	2.9%
Pain Management	24.3%	10.6%	11.7%	7.2%	9.2%	36.8%	0.2%
Plastic Surgery	27.0%	10.2%	9.9%	7.2%	7.0%	38.5%	0.2%
Endocrinology	32.8%	10.5%	6.6%	4.1%	4.8%	28.4%	12.7%
Geriatric Medicine	47.8%	12.0%	9.6%	5.8%	6.9%	16.8%	1.1%
Other	49.3%	13.1%	8.4%	4.3%	4.3%	18.3%	2.4%
<b>All Specialties</b>	<b>26.6%</b>	<b>8.6%</b>	<b>7.5%</b>	<b>5.0%</b>	<b>5.9%</b>	<b>33.1%</b>	<b>13.4%</b>

Source: CH3 Return

<sup>1</sup>Refer 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 2016<sup>2</sup>**

Quarter Ending	Number of Completed First Outpatient Waits		
	Within Health Service Hospitals	Independent Sector*	Total Commissioned by Health Service
QE June 2014	115,770	9,696	125,466
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 <sup>R</sup>	118,739	251	118,990
QE Sept 2015 <sup>R</sup>	116,659	248	116,907
QE Dec 2015 <sup>R</sup>	124,695	789	125,484
QE Mar 2016 <sup>R</sup>	124,713	23,763	148,476

Source: QOAR and IS1 Part 1

<sup>R</sup> Data is revised

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

\* Not National Statistics

<sup>2</sup>Refer to Explanatory Notes 1,4 & 10-11

## Appendix 2: Explanatory Notes

1. The source for the data contained in this release is 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-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 1<sup>st</sup> 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 timeband 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 timeband 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) timeband.
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. Revised figures for the Northern HSC Trust for the end of March 2016 have been received and included within this publication.
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 2. 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 30<sup>th</sup> September 2016 will be released on Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> November 2016.



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

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