

INFORMATION  
ANALYSIS  
DIRECTORATE



# Northern Ireland

## Waiting Time Statistics:

### Inpatient and Day Case Waiting Times

### Quarter Ending September 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 30<sup>th</sup> September 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 September 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-September-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

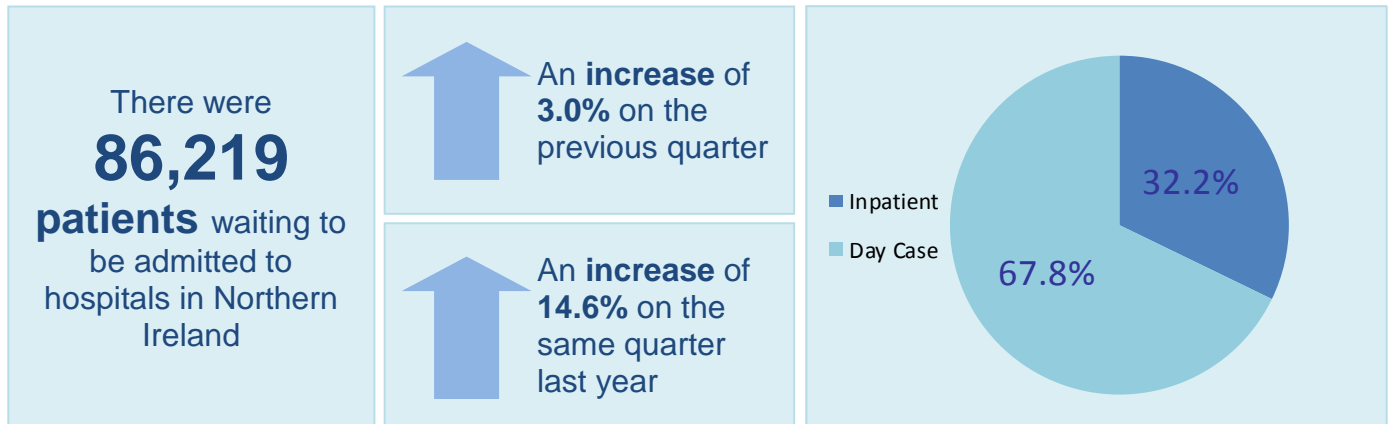
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**By March 2019, 55% of patients should wait no longer than 13 weeks for inpatient/day case treatment, with no patient waiting longer than 52 weeks.**

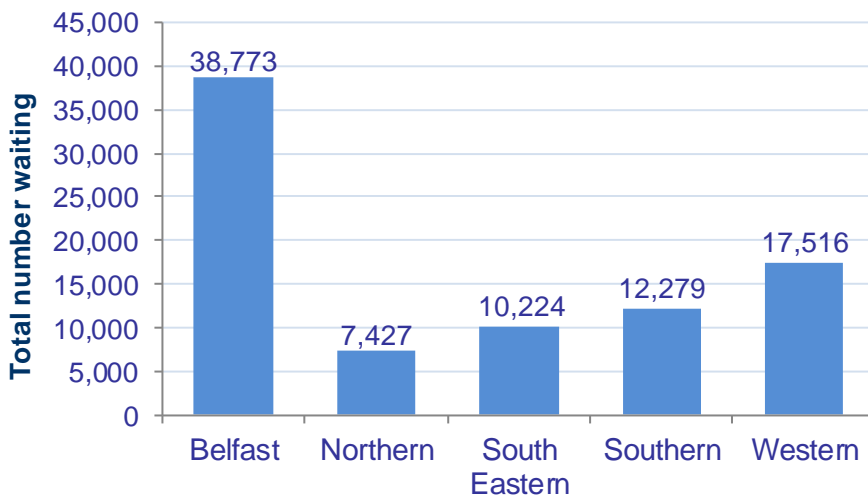
## Total number of patients waiting at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2018



Source: DoH Inpatient Waiting Times Dataset

At 30<sup>th</sup> September 2018, a total of 86,219 patients were waiting to be admitted to hospitals in Northern Ireland, 3.0% (2,473) more than at 30<sup>th</sup> June 2018 (83,746), and 14.6% (10,979) more than at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2017 (75,240) (Table 1).

Almost one third (32.2%, 27,749) of those waiting for admission at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2018 were waiting for an inpatient admission, with the remaining 67.8% (58,470) waiting for a day case admission (Table 1).



Source: DoH Inpatient Waiting Times Dataset

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).

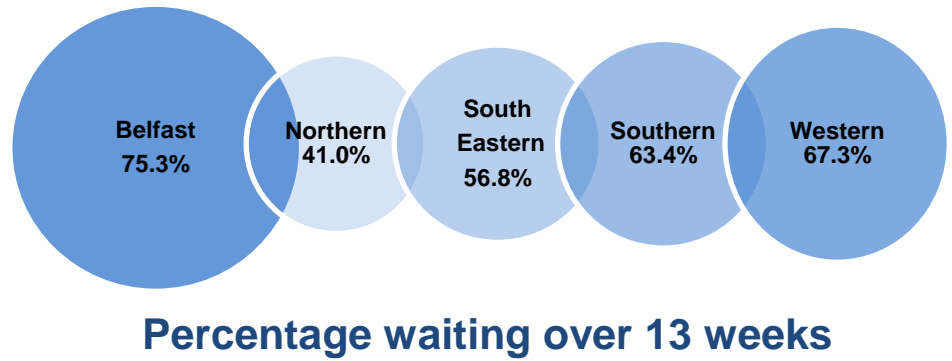
Over two fifths (45.0%) were waiting to be admitted in the Belfast HSC Trust, with a further 20.3% waiting in the Western HSC Trust, 14.2% in the Southern HSC Trust, 11.9% in the South Eastern HSC Trust and 8.6% in the Northern HSC Trust (Table 2a).

Almost four fifths (79.7%, 68,744) of the 86,219 patients were waiting for admission in one of the following specialties: General Surgery (16,567); Trauma and Orthopaedic (T&O) Surgery (16,408); Ophthalmology (9,398); Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT) (8,654); Urology (7,805), Gynaecology (5,178) and Gastroenterology (4,734) (Table 3a).

## Patients waiting more than 13 weeks at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2018

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

**66.8%**  
of patients were waiting longer than 13 weeks



Source: DoH Inpatient Waiting Times Dataset

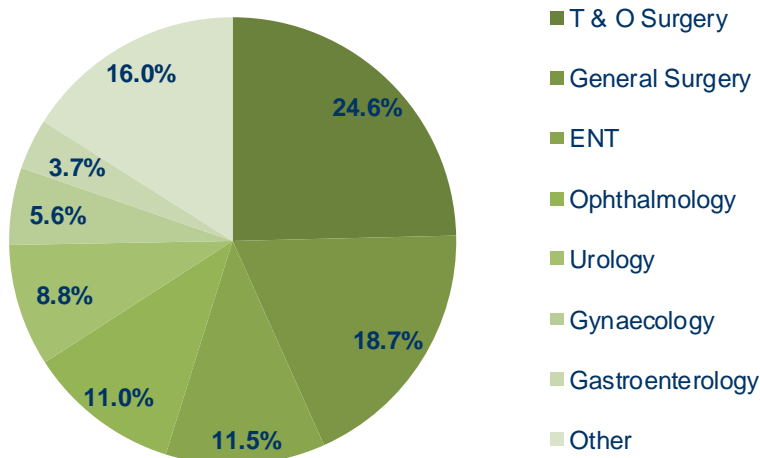
Achievement of the 13 week target requires that less than 45% of patients should be waiting over 13 weeks for inpatient or day case admission.

At 30<sup>th</sup> September 2018, 66.8% (57,617) of patients were waiting more than 13 weeks to be admitted for treatment, compared with 63.1% (52,872) at 30<sup>th</sup> June 2018 and 62.5% (47,009) at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2017 (Table 1).

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

Four-fifths (80.0%, 22,194) of patients waiting for an inpatient admission were waiting over 13 weeks. This is compared with 60.6% (35,423) waiting over 13 weeks for a day case admission (Table 1).

### Patients waiting over 13 weeks by specialty



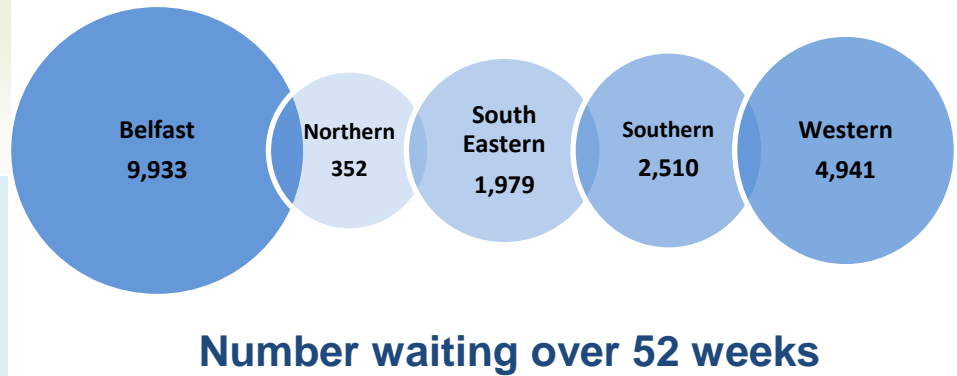
Over four-fifths (84.0%, 48,379) of the 57,617 patients waiting more than 13 weeks at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2018 were in one of the following specialties: Trauma and Orthopaedic (T&O) Surgery; General Surgery; Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT); Ophthalmology; Urology; Gynaecology and Gastroenterology (Table 3a).

Source: DoH Inpatient Waiting Times Dataset

## Patients waiting more than 52 weeks at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2018

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

**19,715**  
patients were waiting longer than 52 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.

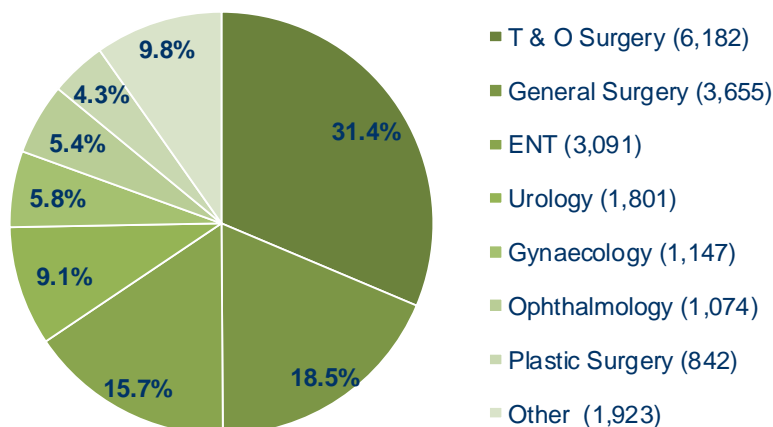
At 30<sup>th</sup> September 2018, 22.9% (19,715) of patients were waiting more than 52 weeks for either an inpatient or day case admission, compared with 21.6% (18,080) at 30<sup>th</sup> June 2018, and 17.5% (13,176) at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2017 (Table 1).

At 30<sup>th</sup> September 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 (28.2%, 4,941) of patients in the Western HSC Trust were waiting longer than 52 weeks at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2018, 25.6% (9,933) in the Belfast HSC Trust, 20.4% (2,510) in the Southern HSC Trust, 19.4% (1,979) in the South Eastern HSC Trust, and 4.7% (352) in the Northern HSC Trust (Table 2a).

Of those waiting more than 52 weeks, 10,128 were waiting for an inpatient admission and 9,587 were waiting for a day case admission (Table 1).

### Patients waiting over 52 weeks by specialty



A total of 90.2% (17,792) of the 19,715 patients waiting more than 52 weeks to be admitted were in one of the following specialties: Trauma and Orthopaedic (T&O) Surgery; General Surgery; Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT); Urology; Gynaecology; Ophthalmology and Plastic Surgery (Table 3a).

Source: DoH Inpatient Waiting Times Dataset

## Completed waits for inpatient and day case activity during quarter ending 30<sup>th</sup> September 2018

There were  
**43,126**

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



A decrease of **5.9%** on the previous quarter

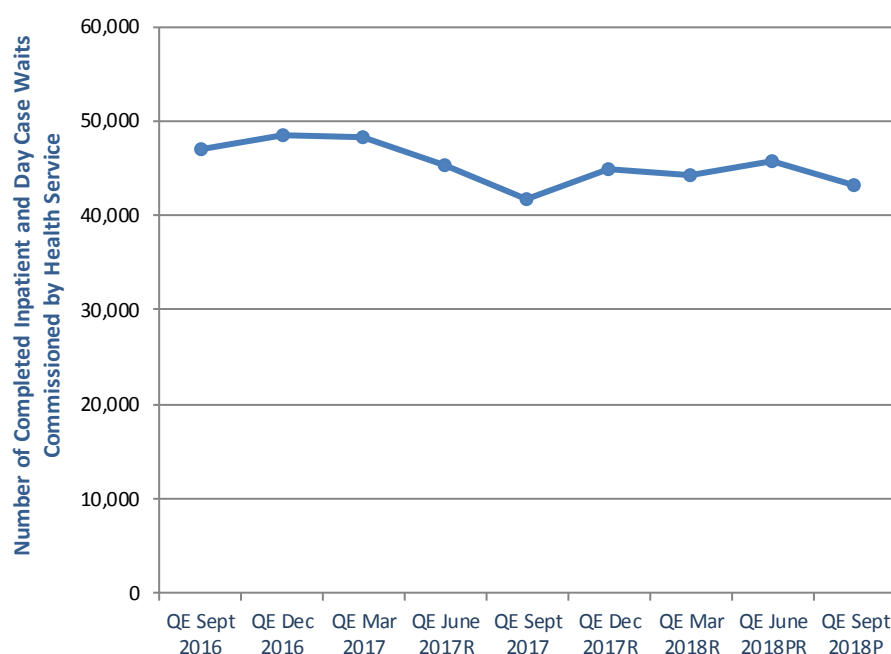


An **increase of 3.2%** on the same quarter last year

Source: Hospital Inpatient System & IS1 Part 2 Return

A total of 42,000 patients were admitted to Health Service hospitals in Northern Ireland during the quarter ending September 2018, 6.0% (2,703) less than during the quarter ending June 2018 (44,703) and 1.3% more than during the quarter ending September 2017 (41,467) (Table 4).

During the quarter ending September 2018, 1,126 patients received inpatient or day case treatment commissioned by the Health Service within the Independent Sector, remaining similar to the number seen during the quarter ending June 2018 (1,128), and over three times the number during the same quarter last year (339) (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 September 2018 (1,126) is combined with those treated in Health Service hospitals during the same period (42,000), provisional figures indicate that 43,126 inpatients and day cases received treatment in Northern Ireland commissioned by the Health Service. This was a 5.9% (2,705)

decrease in the number of completed waits commissioned by the Health Service between the quarter ending June 2018 (45,831) and the quarter ending September 2018 (43,126) and an increase of 3.2% (1,320) compared to quarter ending September 2017 (41,806) (Table 4).

## Appendix 1: Tables

**Table 1: Quarterly inpatient and day case waiting lists – 30<sup>th</sup> September 2018<sup>1</sup>**

Type of Admission		Current Quarter (30 <sup>th</sup> Sept 2018)	Previous Quarter (30 <sup>th</sup> Jun 2018)	Same Quarter Last Year (30 <sup>th</sup> Sept 2017)
<b>Inpatient</b>	Total Patients Waiting	27,749	27,124	24,364
	Number waiting over 13 weeks	22,194	20,952	18,768
	<i>Percentage waiting over 13 weeks</i>	80.0%	77.2%	77.0%
	Number waiting over 52 weeks	10,128	9,407	7,193
<b>Day Case</b>	Total Patients Waiting	58,470	56,622	50,876
	Number waiting over 13 weeks	35,423	31,920	28,241
	<i>Percentage waiting over 13 weeks</i>	60.6%	56.4%	55.5%
	Number waiting over 52 weeks	9,587	8,673	5,983
<b>All Admissions</b>	Total Patients Waiting	86,219	83,746	75,240
	Number waiting over 13 weeks	57,617	52,872	47,009
	<i>Percentage waiting over 13 weeks</i>	66.8%	63.1%	62.5%
	Number waiting over 52 weeks	19,715	18,080	13,176

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 – 30<sup>th</sup> September 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	4,895	4,685	5,315	2,866	11,079	9,933	38,773
Northern	2,747	1,636	1,285	475	932	352	7,427
South Eastern	2,829	1,583	1,456	587	1,790	1,979	10,224
Southern	2,745	1,750	1,617	897	2,760	2,510	12,279
Western	3,358	2,374	2,245	1,112	3,486	4,941	17,516
<b>Total</b>	<b>16,574</b>	<b>12,028</b>	<b>11,918</b>	<b>5,937</b>	<b>20,047</b>	<b>19,715</b>	<b>86,219</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 – 30<sup>th</sup> September 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	12.6%	12.1%	13.7%	7.4%	28.6%	25.6%
Northern	37.0%	22.0%	17.3%	6.4%	12.5%	4.7%
South Eastern	27.7%	15.5%	14.2%	5.7%	17.5%	19.4%
Southern	22.4%	14.3%	13.2%	7.3%	22.5%	20.4%
Western	19.2%	13.6%	12.8%	6.3%	19.9%	28.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>19.2%</b>	<b>14.0%</b>	<b>13.8%</b>	<b>6.9%</b>	<b>23.3%</b>	<b>22.9%</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 speciality – 30<sup>th</sup> September 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	3,470	2,334	2,353	1,207	3,548	3,655	16,567
T & O Surgery	695	1,530	2,177	1,170	4,654	6,182	16,408
Ophthalmology	1,511	1,532	1,749	753	2,779	1,074	9,398
ENT	1,103	899	1,061	535	1,965	3,091	8,654
Urology	1,850	860	981	539	1,774	1,801	7,805
Gynaecology	1,188	775	646	315	1,107	1,147	5,178
Gastroenterology	1,756	862	668	371	973	104	4,734
General Medicine	1,735	1,029	552	209	657	376	4,558
Cardiology	623	533	417	243	456	82	2,354
Pain Management	322	361	304	180	668	517	2,352
Plastic Surgery	453	240	269	108	439	842	2,351
Oral Surgery	265	206	139	46	266	174	1,096
Paediatric Surgery	144	90	100	66	249	270	919
GP Other	355	202	74	19	13	2	665
Dermatology	311	108	96	42	70	3	630
Paediatrics	54	64	61	38	155	53	425
Neurology	97	37	51	10	37	87	319
Rheumatology	130	69	14	0	6	50	269
Neurosurgery	61	41	35	20	70	37	264
Other	451	256	171	66	161	168	1,273
<b>All Specialties</b>	<b>16,574</b>	<b>12,028</b>	<b>11,918</b>	<b>5,937</b>	<b>20,047</b>	<b>19,715</b>	<b>86,219</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 specialty – 30<sup>th</sup> September 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	20.9%	14.1%	14.2%	7.3%	21.4%	22.1%
T & O Surgery	4.2%	9.3%	13.3%	7.1%	28.4%	37.7%
Ophthalmology	16.1%	16.3%	18.6%	8.0%	29.6%	11.4%
ENT	12.7%	10.4%	12.3%	6.2%	22.7%	35.7%
Urology	23.7%	11.0%	12.6%	6.9%	22.7%	23.1%
Gynaecology	22.9%	15.0%	12.5%	6.1%	21.4%	22.2%
Gastroenterology	37.1%	18.2%	14.1%	7.8%	20.6%	2.2%
General Medicine	38.1%	22.6%	12.1%	4.6%	14.4%	8.2%
Cardiology	26.5%	22.6%	17.7%	10.3%	19.4%	3.5%
Pain Management	13.7%	15.3%	12.9%	7.7%	28.4%	22.0%
Plastic Surgery	19.3%	10.2%	11.4%	4.6%	18.7%	35.8%
Oral Surgery	24.2%	18.8%	12.7%	4.2%	24.3%	15.9%
Paediatric Surgery	15.7%	9.8%	10.9%	7.2%	27.1%	29.4%
GP Other	53.4%	30.4%	11.1%	2.9%	2.0%	0.3%
Dermatology	49.4%	17.1%	15.2%	6.7%	11.1%	0.5%
Paediatrics	12.7%	15.1%	14.4%	8.9%	36.5%	12.5%
Neurology	30.4%	11.6%	16.0%	3.1%	11.6%	27.3%
Rheumatology	48.3%	25.7%	5.2%	0.0%	2.2%	18.6%
Neurosurgery	23.1%	15.5%	13.3%	7.6%	26.5%	14.0%
Other	35.4%	20.1%	13.4%	5.2%	12.6%	13.2%
<b>All Specialties</b>	<b>19.2%</b>	<b>14.0%</b>	<b>13.8%</b>	<b>6.9%</b>	<b>23.3%</b>	<b>22.9%</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 September 2016 - QE September 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 Sept 2016	42,939	4,118	47,057
QE Dec 2016	45,843	2,589	48,432
QE Mar 2017	44,541	3,719	48,260
QE June 2017 <sup>R</sup>	44,641	599	45,240
QE Sept 2017	41,467	339	41,806
QE Dec 2017 <sup>R</sup>	44,351	545	44,896
QE Mar 2018 <sup>R</sup>	41,586	2,793	44,379
QE June 2018 <sup>PR</sup>	44,703	1,128	45,831
QE Sept 2018 <sup>P</sup>	42,000	1,126	43,126

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-September-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-September-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> December 2018 will be released on Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> February 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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