

INFORMATION
ANALYSIS
DIRECTORATE



Northern Ireland Waiting Time Statistics: Inpatient and Day Case Waiting Times Quarter Ending September 2020

Reader Information

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 2020/21 Ministerial waiting time target which states that:

“By March 2021, 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 30th September 2020. 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 2020.

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/inpatient-and-day-case-waiting-times-supporting-documentation>

Internet: <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/articles/inpatient-waiting-times>

Authors: Mary Farrelly, Adam Robinson, Siobhán Morgan

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Information & Analysis Directorate
Department of Health
Stormont Estate, Belfast, BT4 3SQ

Contact Information and further copies: statistics@health-ni.gov.uk

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.

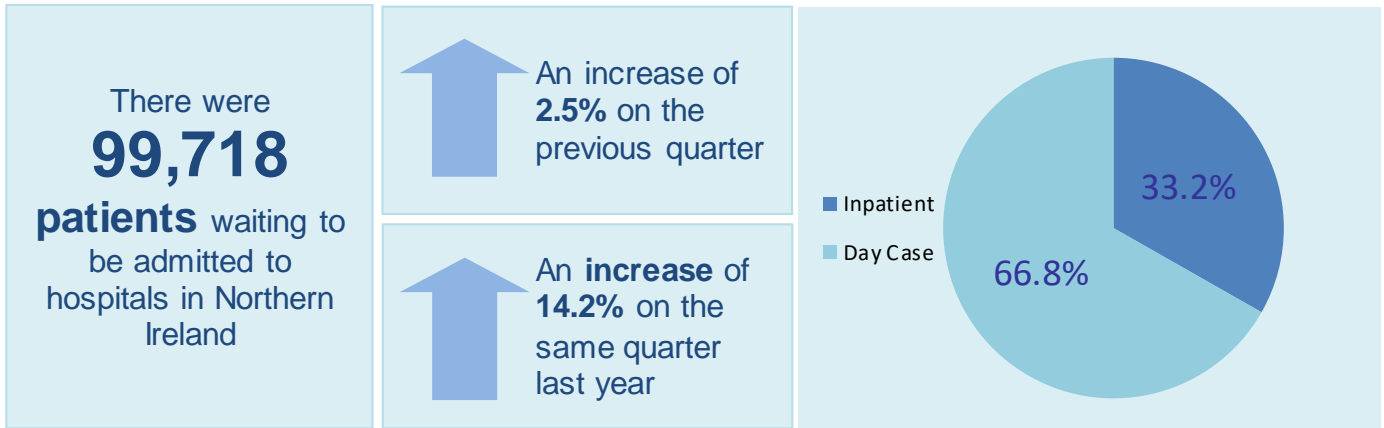
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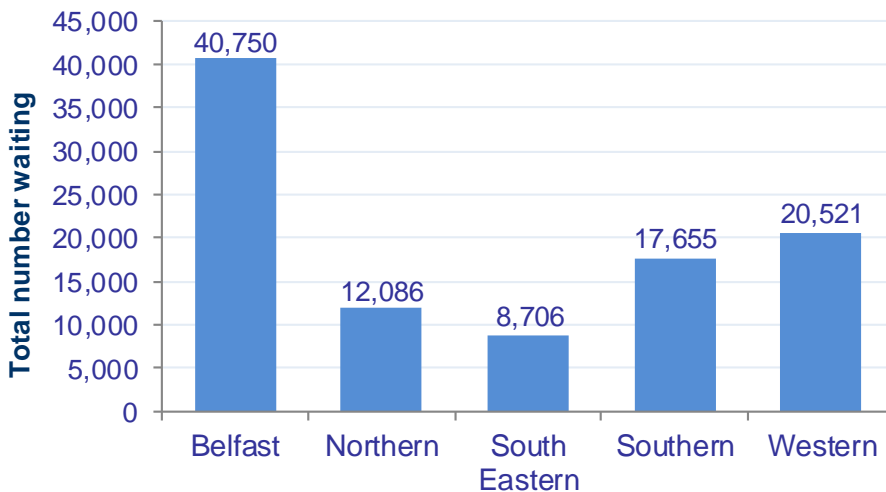
Total number of patients waiting at 30th September 2020



Source: DoH Inpatient Waiting Times Dataset

At 30th September 2020, a total of 99,718 patients were waiting to be admitted to hospitals in Northern Ireland, 2.5% (2,475) more than at 30th June 2020 (97,243), and 14.2% (12,365) more than at 30th September 2019 (87,353) (Table 1).

One third (33.2%, 33,136) of those waiting for admission at 30th September 2020 were waiting for an inpatient admission, with the remaining 66.8% (66,582) 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 (40.9%) were waiting to be admitted in the Belfast HSC Trust, with a further 20.6% waiting in the Western HSC Trust, 17.7% in the Southern HSC Trust, 12.1% in the Northern HSC Trust and 8.7% in the South Eastern HSC Trust (Table 2a).

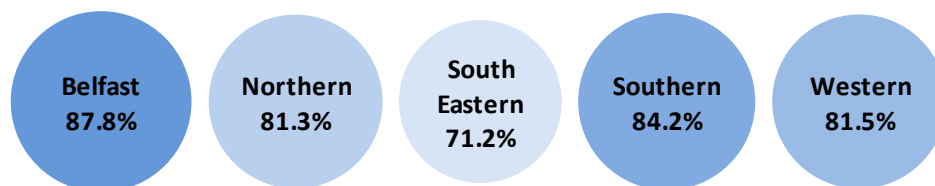
Of the 99,718 patients waiting for admission, four fifths (80.5%, 80,321) were in one of the following specialties: General Surgery (20,846); T & O Surgery (19,309); ENT (11,362); Urology (8,513); Gastroenterology (7,662); Ophthalmology (6,525) and Gynaecology (6,104) (Table 3a).

Patients waiting more than 13 weeks at 30th September 2020

By March 2021, 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

83.6%
of patients were waiting longer than 13 weeks



Percentage waiting over 13 weeks

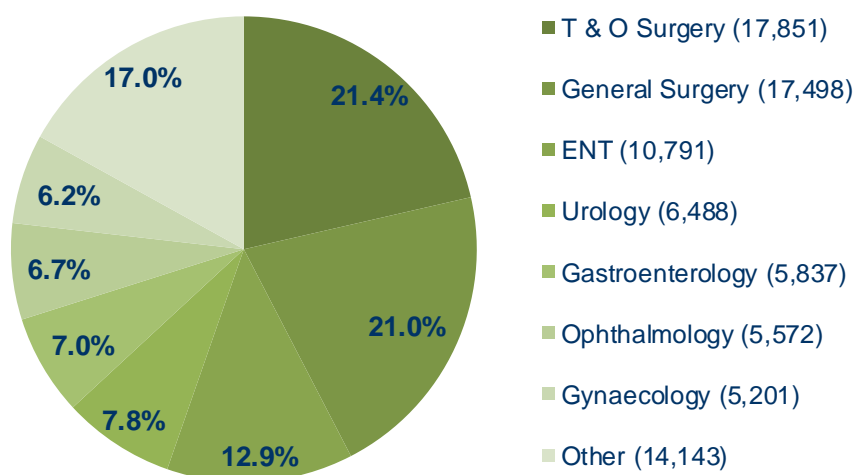
Source: DoH Inpatient Waiting Times Dataset

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 30th September 2020, 83.6% (83,381) of patients were waiting more than 13 weeks to be admitted for treatment, compared with 88.8% (86,337) at 30th June 2020 and 69.6% (60,809) at 30th September 2019 (Table 1).

At 30th September 2020, the 13 week element of the target was not achieved by Northern Ireland as a whole (Table 2a), or by the HSC Trusts. 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, more than nine tenths (90.5%, 29,984) were waiting over 13 weeks. This is compared with 80.2% (53,397) waiting over 13 weeks for a day case admission (Table 1).

Patients waiting over 13 weeks by specialty



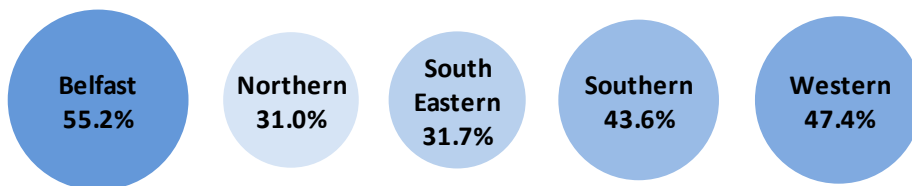
Over four fifths (83.0%, 69,238) of the 83,381 patients waiting more than 13 weeks at the end of September 2020 were in one of the following specialties: T & O Surgery (17,851); General Surgery (17,498); ENT (10,791); Urology (6,488); Gastroenterology (5,837); Ophthalmology (5,572) and Gynaecology (5,201) (Table 3a).

Patients waiting more than 52 weeks at 30th September 2020

By March 2021, no patient should wait longer than 52 weeks for inpatient/day case treatment

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

46,417
patients were waiting longer than 52 weeks



Percentage waiting over 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.

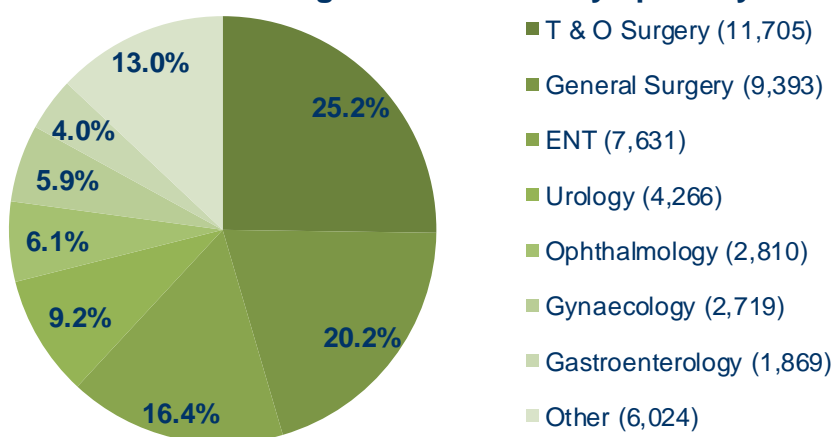
At 30th September 2020, 46.5% (46,417) of patients were waiting more than 52 weeks for either an inpatient or day case admission, compared with 39.4% (38,354) at 30th June 2020, and 28.9% (25,274) at 30th September 2019 (Table 1).

At 30th September 2020, 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).

More than half (55.2%, 22,488) of patients in the Belfast HSC Trust were waiting longer than 52 weeks at 30th September 2020, almost half (47.4%, 9,722) in the Western HSC Trust, 43.6% (7,693) in the Southern HSC Trust, 31.7% (2,763) in the South Eastern HSC Trust and 31.0% (3,751) in the Northern HSC Trust (Table 2a).

Of those waiting more than 52 weeks, 20,417 were waiting for an inpatient admission and 26,000 were waiting for a day case admission (Table 1).

Patients waiting over 52 weeks by specialty



Almost nine tenths (87.0%, 40,393) of the 46,417 patients waiting more than 52 weeks on the 30th September 2020 were in one of the following specialties: T & O Surgery; General Surgery; ENT; Urology; Ophthalmology; Gynaecology and Gastroenterology (Table 3a).

Source: DoH Inpatient Waiting Times Dataset

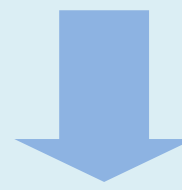
Completed waits for inpatient and day case activity during quarter ending 30th September 2020

There were
25,654

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



An **increase** of 74.8% on the previous quarter

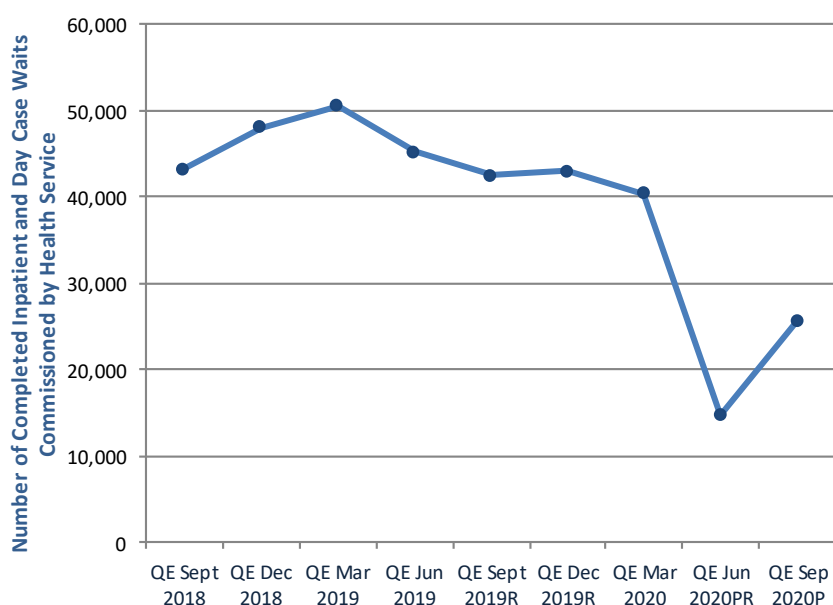


A **decrease** of 39.6% on the same quarter last year

Source: Hospital Inpatient System & IS1 Part 2 Return

A total of 24,395 patients were admitted to Health Service hospitals in Northern Ireland during the quarter ending 30th September 2020, 78.9% (10,762) more than during the quarter ending 30th June 2020 (13,633) and 40.6% (16,687) fewer than during the quarter ending 30th September 2019 (41,082) (Table 4). Users should be aware that the Covid-19 Pandemic drastically altered the functions of hospitals during the current reporting period and should exercise caution when using these provisional data given that hospital records may not be fully updated at this time.

During the quarter ending 30th September 2020, 1,259 patients received inpatient or day case treatment commissioned by the Health Service within the Independent Sector, 20.7% (216) more than the number seen during the quarter ending 30th June 2020 (1,043), and 11.0% (155) lower than that seen during quarter ending September 2019 (1,414).



Source: Hospital Inpatient System & IS1 Part 2 Return
* Data are currently provisional

When the number of completed inpatient and day case waits within the Independent Sector during the quarter ending 30th September 2020 (1,259) is combined with those treated in Health Service hospitals during the same period (24,395), provisional figures indicate that 25,654 inpatients and day cases received treatment in Northern Ireland commissioned by the Health Service. This was a 74.8% (10,978) increase in the

number of completed waits commissioned by the Health Service between the quarter ending June 2020 (14,676) and the quarter ending September 2020 (25,654) and a decrease of 39.6% (16,842) compared to the quarter ending September 2019 (42,496) (Table 4).

Patients waiting at a Day Case Procedure Centre (DPC) at 30th September 2020

There were
3,708

Patients waiting to be admitted to a Day Case Procedure Centre (DPC)

There were
961

Patients waiting to be admitted to a Varicose Veins DPC

There were
2,747

Patients waiting to be admitted to a Cataracts DPC

Source: DoH Inpatient Waiting Times Dataset

In October 2016 the then Health Minister launched 'Health and Wellbeing 2026: Delivering Together,' a strategy which underpins the Northern Ireland Executive's draft Programme for Government ambition to support people to lead long, healthy and active lives.

As part of this strategy, the Elective Care Plan was published in February 2017 which stated that 'Regional Elective Care Assessment and Treatment Centres will be established to deliver large volumes of assessments and non-complex routine surgery across a broad range of specialties.' In December 2018, prototype 'Day Case Procedure Centres' (DPC) became operational for the surgical treatment of Cataracts and Varicose Veins. Patients waiting for either of these procedures can now be referred to a DPC for treatment rather than attend the hospital site they may have been referred to previously.

DPCs have been set up in the following locations:

DPC	Location(s) of Centre
Cataracts	Mid Ulster Hospital (Northern HSC Trust) Down Hospital (South Eastern HSC Trust) South Tyrone Hospital (Southern HSC Trust)
Varicose Veins	Lagan Valley Hospital (South Eastern HSC Trust) Omagh Urgent Care and Treatment Centre (Western HSC Trust)

At 30th September 2020, 961 patients were waiting to be admitted to a Varicose Veins DPC, with a further 2,747 patients waiting to be admitted to a Cataracts DPC (Table 5).

Appendix 1: Tables

Table 1: Quarterly inpatient and day case waiting lists – 30th September 2020¹

Type of Admission		Current Quarter (Sep 20)	Previous Quarter (Jun 20)	Same Quarter Last Year (Sep 19)
Inpatient	Total Patients Waiting	33,136	32,472	30,163
	Number waiting over 13 weeks	29,984	30,450	24,952
	<i>Percentage waiting over 13 weeks</i>	90.5%	93.8%	82.7%
	Number waiting over 52 weeks	46,417	38,354	25,274
Day Case	Total Patients Waiting	66,582	64,771	57,190
	Number waiting over 13 weeks	53,397	55,887	35,857
	<i>Percentage waiting over 13 weeks</i>	80.2%	86.3%	62.7%
	Number waiting over 52 weeks	26,000	20,554	12,243
All Admissions	Total Patients Waiting	99,718	97,243	87,353
	Number waiting over 13 weeks	83,381	86,337	60,809
	<i>Percentage waiting over 13 weeks</i>	83.6%	88.8%	69.6%
	Number waiting over 52 weeks	72,417	58,908	37,517

Source: DoH Inpatient Waiting Times Dataset

¹Refer 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 – 30th September 2020¹

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	3,101	1,882	1,419	552	11,308	22,488	40,750
Northern	1,431	833	556	344	5,171	3,751	12,086
South							
Eastern	1,763	744	586	248	2,602	2,763	8,706
Southern	1,664	1,123	788	311	6,076	7,693	17,655
Western	2,257	1,539	1,015	266	5,722	9,722	20,521
Total	10,216	6,121	4,364	1,721	30,879	46,417	99,718

Source: DoH Inpatient Waiting Times Dataset

¹Refer 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 – 30th September 2020¹

HSC Trust	Patients Waiting for Admission by Weeks Waiting					
	0 - 6	>6 - 13	>13 - 21	>21 - 26	>26-52	>52
Belfast	7.6%	4.6%	3.5%	1.4%	27.7%	55.2%
Northern	11.8%	6.9%	4.6%	2.8%	42.8%	31.0%
South Eastern	20.3%	8.5%	6.7%	2.8%	29.9%	31.7%
Southern	9.4%	6.4%	4.5%	1.8%	34.4%	43.6%
Western	11.0%	7.5%	4.9%	1.3%	27.9%	47.4%
Total	10.2%	6.1%	4.4%	1.7%	31.0%	46.5%

Source: DoH Inpatient Waiting Times Dataset

¹Refer to Explanatory Notes 1–14 & 18-19

Table 3a: Number of patients waiting for inpatient and day case admissions by weeks waiting and specialty – 30th September 2020¹

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	2,144	1,204	884	366	6,855	9,393	20,846
T & O Surgery	728	730	644	140	5,362	11,705	19,309
Ophthalmology	535	418	188	60	2,514	2,810	6,525
ENT	352	219	121	50	2,989	7,631	11,362
Urology	1,349	676	404	170	1,648	4,266	8,513
Gynaecology	520	383	296	88	2,098	2,719	6,104
Gastroenterology	1,218	607	556	351	3,061	1,869	7,662
General Medicine	1,402	924	530	179	1,787	1,265	6,087
Cardiology	444	254	216	116	702	461	2,193
Pain Management	98	105	70	16	644	904	1,837
Plastic Surgery	212	86	107	43	736	1,666	2,850
Oral Surgery	209	86	37	9	307	217	865
Paediatric Surgery	58	53	32	10	298	305	756
GP Other	177	61	7	7	447	18	717
Dermatology	234	84	54	28	420	159	979
Paediatrics	28	18	18	6	222	307	599
Neurology	47	36	24	17	150	115	389
Rheumatology	59	50	58	27	147	1	342
Neurosurgery	37	25	24	11	78	126	301
Other	365	102	94	27	414	480	1,482
All Specialties	10,216	6,121	4,364	1,721	30,879	46,417	99,718

Source: DoH Inpatient Waiting Times Dataset

¹Refer to Explanatory Notes 1–14 & 18-19

Table 3b: Percentage of patients waiting for inpatient and day case admissions by weeks waiting and specialty – 30th September 2020¹

Specialty	Percentage of Patients Waiting for Admission by Weeks Waiting					
	0 - 6	>6 - 13	>13 - 21	>21 - 26	>26-52	>52
General Surgery	10.3%	5.8%	4.2%	1.8%	32.9%	45.1%
T & O Surgery	3.8%	3.8%	3.3%	0.7%	27.8%	60.6%
Ophthalmology	8.2%	6.4%	2.9%	0.9%	38.5%	43.1%
ENT	3.1%	1.9%	1.1%	0.4%	26.3%	67.2%
Urology	15.8%	7.9%	4.7%	2.0%	19.4%	50.1%
Gynaecology	8.5%	6.3%	4.8%	1.4%	34.4%	44.5%
Gastroenterology	15.9%	7.9%	7.3%	4.6%	40.0%	24.4%
General Medicine	23.0%	15.2%	8.7%	2.9%	29.4%	20.8%
Cardiology	20.2%	11.6%	9.8%	5.3%	32.0%	21.0%
Pain Management	5.3%	5.7%	3.8%	0.9%	35.1%	49.2%
Plastic Surgery	7.4%	3.0%	3.8%	1.5%	25.8%	58.5%
Oral Surgery	24.2%	9.9%	4.3%	1.0%	35.5%	25.1%
Paediatric Surgery	7.7%	7.0%	4.2%	1.3%	39.4%	40.3%
GP Other	24.7%	8.5%	1.0%	1.0%	62.3%	2.5%
Dermatology	23.9%	8.6%	5.5%	2.9%	42.9%	16.2%
Paediatrics	4.7%	3.0%	3.0%	1.0%	37.1%	51.3%
Neurology	12.1%	9.3%	6.2%	4.4%	38.6%	29.6%
Rheumatology	17.3%	14.6%	17.0%	7.9%	43.0%	0.3%
Neurosurgery	12.3%	8.3%	8.0%	3.7%	25.9%	41.9%
Other	24.6%	6.9%	6.3%	1.8%	27.9%	32.4%
All Specialties	10.2%	6.1%	4.4%	1.7%	31.0%	46.5%

Source: DoH Inpatient Waiting Times Dataset

¹Refer to Explanatory Notes 1–14 & 18-19

Table 4: Number of completed inpatient and day case waits commissioned by the Health Service: QE December 2017 - QE September 2020²

Quarter Ending	Number of Completed Inpatient and Day Case Waits		
	Within Health Service Hospitals	Independent Sector*	Total Commissioned by Health Service
QE Dec 2017	44,351	545	44,896
QE Mar 2018	41,586	2,793	44,379
QE Jun 2018	44,735	1,164	45,899
QE Sept 2018	42,077	1,135	43,212
QE Dec 2018	45,499	2,514	48,013
QE Mar 2019	43,868	6,595	50,463
QE Jun 2019	42,926	2,262	45,188
QE Sept 2019 ^R	41,082	1,414	42,496
QE Dec 2019 ^R	40,785	2,135	42,920
QE Mar 2020	36,946	3,346	40,292
QE Jun 2020 ^{PR}	13,633	1,043	14,676
QE Sep 2020 ^P	24,395	1,259	25,654

Source: Hospital Inpatient System & IS1 Part 2 Return

^P Data are currently provisional

^R Data has been revised

* Not National Statistics

² Refer to Explanatory Notes 1, 4 & 15-19

Table 5: Number of patients waiting for admission to Day Case Procedure Centres (DPC), 30th September 2020

DPC	Number of patients waiting for DPC Admission by Weeks Waiting						Total Waiting
	0 - 6	>6 - 13	>13 - 21	>21 - 26	>26-52	>52	
Varicose Veins	35	23	43	7	438	415	961
Cataracts	220	280	123	21	1,186	917	2,747
Total	255	303	166	28	1,624	1,332	3,708

Source: DoH Inpatient Waiting Times Dataset

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/inpatient-and-day-case-waiting-times-supporting-documentation>

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-2020>.

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 March 2021, 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 31st December 2020 will be released on Thursday 25th February 2021.

Appendix 3: National Statistics

Data contained within this publication are National Statistics except for information relating to DPC Waiting Lists and or completed inpatient and day case waits.

National Statistics status means that our statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and public value, and it is our responsibility to maintain compliance with these standards.

The statistics last underwent a full assessment against the Code of Practice in 2011:

https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/images-assessmentreport153statisticsonhospitalwaitingtimesinnorthernirelan_tcm97-41176.pdf

Designation was awarded in March 2013:

https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/images-letterofconfirmationasnationalstatisticsassessmentreport15_tcm97-42663.pdf

Since the assessment by the Office for Statistics Regulation, we have continued to comply with the Code of Practice for Statistics.

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

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