

Statistics Release



Department of
**Health, Social Services
and Public Safety**

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AN ROINN

**Sláinte, Seirbhísí Sóisialta
agus Sábháilteachta Poiblí**

MÁNNYSTRIE O

**Poustie, Resydènter Heisin
an Fowk Siccar**

05 June 2008

Northern Ireland Waiting Lists – March 2008

This statistics release gives details of the number of people waiting for either inpatient treatment, a first outpatient assessment or a selected diagnostic service at hospitals in Northern Ireland at the end of March 2008, the most recent quarter for which figures are available.

Inpatients

Headline Totals¹ – Table 1

The total number of patients waiting to be admitted to hospitals in Northern Ireland at the end of March 2008 stood at 36,994.

Over the quarter, comparing the end of March 2008 with the end of December 2007 (38,034), the total number waiting has decreased by 1,040 (-2.7%).

Table 1 Quarterly Inpatient Waiting Lists – March 2008

Waiting for:	Quarter Ending March 2008	Change compared with end of previous quarter
Ordinary Admissions	12,025	-863
Day case Admissions	24,969	-177
Total Waiting	36,994	-1,040

Source: DHSSPS Inpatient Waiting Times Dataset

¹ Refer to technical notes – points 1-6 & 9-12.

Detailed notes and definitions are provided in the Technical Notes.



Numbers Waiting for Ordinary Admission and Day Case Treatment

People on the inpatient waiting list in Northern Ireland can be waiting for admission to hospital as day cases or as ordinary admissions.

Of the 36,994 people waiting for admission to hospital at the end of March 2008, 12,025 (32.5%) were waiting for ordinary admission and 24,969 (67.5%) were waiting for day case admission (Table 1).

Since the end of December 2007, the number of cases waiting for ordinary admission has decreased by 863 (-6.7%) and the number waiting for day case admission has decreased by 177 (-0.7%).

Waiting Times for Ordinary Admission and Day Case Treatment² – Table 2

At the end of March 2008, there were 56 patients waiting more than 21 weeks for inpatient treatment, of which 48 were waiting more than 26 weeks. Of the 56 patients waiting more than 21 weeks, 38 (67.9%) were awaiting ordinary admission and 18 (32.1%) were awaiting day case procedures.

Table 2 Patients Waiting More Than 21 Weeks² – March 2008

Waiting for:	Quarter Ending March 2008	Change compared with end of previous quarter
Ordinary Admissions	38	-290
Day Case Admissions	18	-109
Total Waiting	56	-399

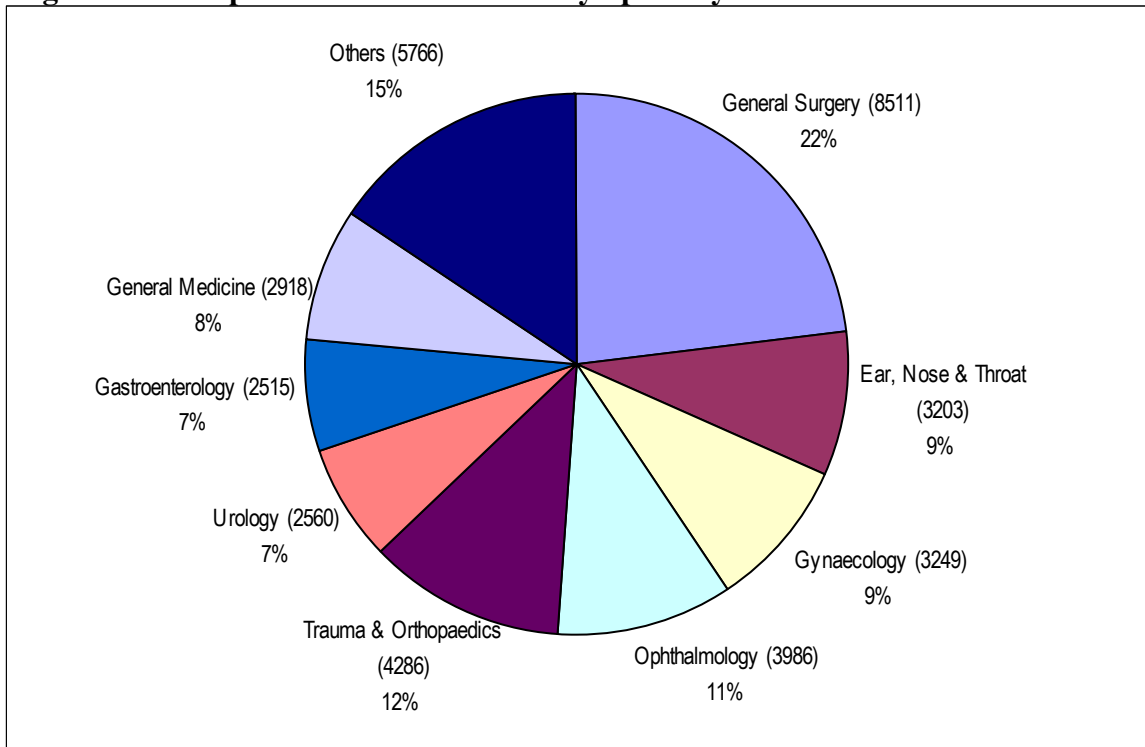
Source: DHSSPS Inpatient Waiting Times Dataset

² Refer to Technical Notes – points 1-13.

Inpatients Waiting by Specialty

The overwhelming majority of those waiting (84.5%) were within eight specialties: General Surgery; Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT); Gynaecology (Gynae); Ophthalmology; Trauma and Orthopaedic Surgery (T&O); Urology; Gastroenterology and General Medicine (Figure 1a).

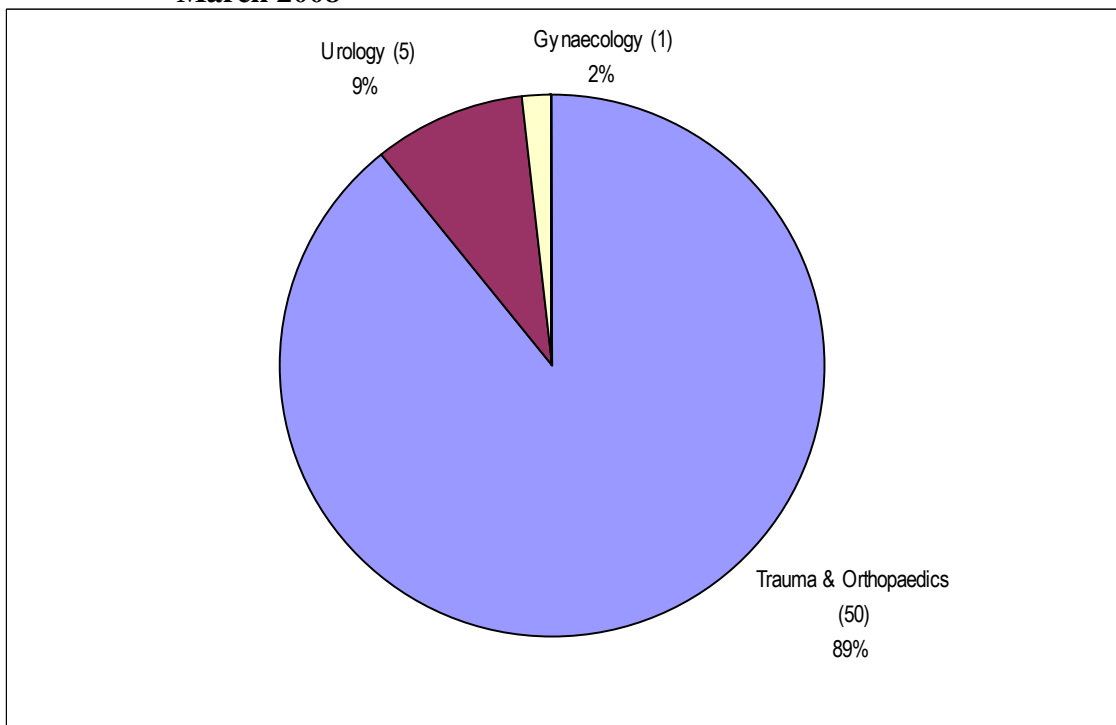
Figure 1a Inpatients - Total Waiters by Specialty at the end of March 2008²



Source: DHSSPS Inpatient Waiting Times Dataset

² Refer to Technical Notes – points 1-13.

Figure 1b Inpatients – Patients waiting more than 21 weeks by Specialty at the end of March 2008²



Source: DHSSPS Inpatient Waiting Times Dataset

² Refer to Technical Notes – points 1-13.

Inpatient Waiting Time by Specialty

Waiting times for inpatients by specialty are shown in Tables 3a and 3b. Overall 99.8% of those waiting for admission were waiting 21 weeks or less. More than 98% of patients were waiting for treatment in the Acute Services Programme of Care.

Table 3a Number of Patients Waiting for Admission by Weeks Waiting and Specialty – March 2008²

Specialty	Patients Waiting for Admission by Weeks Waiting					Total Number of Patients Awaiting Admission
	0 - 6	>6 - 13	>13 - 21	>21 - 26	>26	
General Surgery	3,943	3,177	1,391	0	0	8,511
Trauma & Orthopaedics	1,241	1,580	1,415	8	42	4,286
Ophthalmology	1,365	1,660	961	0	0	3,986
Gynaecology	1,466	1,181	601	0	1	3,249
Ear, Nose & Throat	1,295	1,276	632	0	0	3,203
Urology	1,185	871	499	0	5	2,560
General Medicine	1,346	1,141	431	0	0	2,918
Gastroenterology	1,112	994	409	0	0	2,515
Cardiology	550	412	190	0	0	1,152
Pain Management	364	299	231	0	0	894
Plastic Surgery	255	341	155	0	0	751
Oral Surgery	234	228	62	0	0	524
Rheumatology	138	172	120	0	0	430
Paediatric Surgery	134	132	94	0	0	360
Dermatology	138	168	40	0	0	346
Cardiac Surgery	113	127	91	0	0	331
General Practice (Other)	173	19	4	0	0	196
Neurology	72	39	25	0	0	136
Thoracic Medicine	14	19	15	0	0	48
Nephrology	31	26	5	0	0	62
Other	347	135	54	0	0	536
All Specialties	15,516	13,997	7,425	8	48	36,994

Source: DHSSPS Inpatient Waiting Times Dataset

² Refer to Technical Notes – points 1-13.

Table 3b Percentage of Patients Waiting for Admission by Weeks Waiting and Specialty – March 2008 ²

Specialty	Patients Waiting for Admission by Weeks Waiting				
	0 - 6	>6 - 13	>13 - 21	>21 - 26	>26
General Surgery	46.3%	37.3%	16.3%	0.0%	0.0%
Trauma & Orthopaedics	29.0%	36.9%	33.0%	0.2%	1.0%
Ophthalmology	34.2%	41.6%	24.1%	0.0%	0.0%
Gynaecology	45.1%	36.3%	18.5%	0.0%	0.0%
Ear, Nose & Throat	40.4%	39.8%	19.7%	0.0%	0.0%
Urology	46.3%	34.0%	19.5%	0.0%	0.2%
General Medicine	46.1%	39.1%	14.8%	0.0%	0.0%
Gastroenterology	44.2%	39.5%	16.3%	0.0%	0.0%
Cardiology	47.7%	35.8%	16.5%	0.0%	0.0%
Pain Management	40.7%	33.4%	25.8%	0.0%	0.0%
Plastic Surgery	34.0%	45.4%	20.6%	0.0%	0.0%
Oral Surgery	44.7%	43.5%	11.8%	0.0%	0.0%
Rheumatology	32.1%	40.0%	27.9%	0.0%	0.0%
Paediatric Surgery	37.2%	36.7%	26.1%	0.0%	0.0%
Dermatology	39.9%	48.6%	11.6%	0.0%	0.0%
Cardiac Surgery	34.1%	38.4%	27.5%	0.0%	0.0%
General Practice (Other)	88.3%	9.7%	2.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Neurology	52.9%	28.7%	18.4%	0.0%	0.0%
Thoracic Medicine	29.2%	39.6%	31.3%	0.0%	0.0%
Nephrology	50.0%	41.9%	8.1%	0.0%	0.0%
Other	64.7%	25.2%	10.1%	0.0%	0.0%
All Specialties	41.9%	37.8%	20.1%	0.0%	0.1%

Source: DHSSPS Inpatient Waiting Times Dataset

² Refer to Technical Notes – points 1-13.

Inpatient Waiting Times by Provider Trust

Waiting times for inpatients by Trust are shown in Table 4.

Table 4 Number of Patients Waiting for Admission by Provider Trust and by Weeks Waiting – March 2008³

Provider Trust	Patients Waiting for Admission by Weeks Waiting					Total Number of Patients Waiting
	0 - 6	>6 - 13	>13 - 21	>21 - 26	>26	
Belfast	6,146	5,865	3,751	8	47	15,817
Northern	2,441	2,049	950	0	0	5,440
South Eastern	2,165	1,567	327	0	0	4,059
Southern	2,250	2,394	1,514	0	1	6,159
Western	2,514	2,122	883	0	0	5,519
Total	15,516	13,997	7,425	8	48	36,994

Source: DHSSPS Inpatient Waiting Times Dataset

³ Refer to Technical Notes – points 1-14.

Completed Inpatient Waits – March 2008

Waiting times for completed inpatient waits, for patients treated within Health Service hospitals in Northern Ireland are shown in Table 5. A total of 45,218 inpatients were admitted to Health Service hospitals during the March 2008 quarter. Of those patients who did not self defer, or fail to attend on a previously arranged admission date, 74.2% received their treatment within 3 months of being placed on the waiting list and 99.4% received their treatment within 6 months.

Table 5 Completed Inpatient Waits⁴

Quarter	Time Waiting in Months					Total Number of Completed Inpatient Waits	
	0 - 2	3 - 5	6 - 8	9 - 11	12+	Excluding patients who self deferred or did not attend on a previously arranged admission date	Including patients who self deferred or did not attend on a previously arranged admission date
J - M 2005	72.7%	12.9%	4.9%	3.9%	5.6%	39,359	42,567
A - J 2005	73.9%	12.5%	6.2%	3.1%	4.3%	41,285	44,448
J - S 2005	71.8%	12.9%	5.4%	3.9%	6.0%	37,191	40,422
O - D 2005	72.5%	11.6%	6.1%	5.0%	4.8%	40,456	44,606
J - D 2005	72.8%	12.5%	5.6%	4.0%	5.2%	158,291	172,043
J - M 2006	70.0%	13.7%	6.9%	5.8%	3.6%	41,240	45,827
A - J 2006	70.8%	14.8%	8.2%	4.8%	1.3%	39,425	43,553
J - S 2006	69.5%	16.5%	8.7%	4.4%	1.0%	36,858	41,004
O - D 2006	70.7%	17.7%	9.5%	1.4%	0.6%	39,973	44,994
J - D 2006	70.2%	15.7%	8.3%	4.1%	1.7%	157,496	175,378
J - M 2007	70.3%	22.0%	6.7%	0.6%	0.4%	41,197	46,645
A - J 2007	70.8%	25.5%	3.3%	0.2%	0.2%	40,856	46,140
J - S 2007	70.2%	27.2%	2.2%	0.3%	0.2%	38,530	43,853
O - D 2007	74.7%	23.9%	1.1%	0.2%	0.2%	40,538	46,230
J - D 2007	71.5%	24.6%	3.4%	0.3%	0.2%	161,121	182,868
J - M 2008	74.2%	25.2%	0.5%	0.1%	0.1%	39,092	45,218

Source: Departmental Return CH2

⁴ Refer to Technical Notes – point 15.

Completed Inpatient Waits including Independent Sector Activity – March 2008

During the March 2008 quarter, a number of patients received inpatient treatment commissioned by the Health Service, within the Independent Sector. Estimates of the number of patients admitted for inpatient treatment within the Independent Sector have been provided by the commissioning Trust.

It is estimated that approximately 2,655 Health Service patients were treated within the Independent Sector during the quarter ending March 2008. When this number is combined with that for inpatients admitted to Health Service hospitals during the quarter, it is estimated that approximately 47,873 inpatients were admitted to hospital in Northern Ireland for treatment commissioned by the Health Service.

Table 6a Completed Inpatient Waits by Trust including Independent Sector Activity⁵

Provider Trust	Number of Completed Inpatient Waits within Health Service Hospitals	Number of Completed Inpatient Waits in Independent Sector	Total Number of Completed Inpatient Waits Commissioned by Health Service
Belfast	19,871	1,198	21,069
Northern	5,747	70	5,817
South Eastern	6,705	295	7,000
Southern	6,451	266	6,717
Western	6,444	826	7,270
Total Treated	45,218	2,655	47,873

Source: Health and Social Care Trusts

⁵ Refer to Technical Notes – points 14 & 16-17.

Completed Inpatient Waits including Independent Sector Activity, March 2007 - March 2008

Table 6b has been included to reflect the total completed inpatient waits for Health Service patients for the past five quarters.

Table 6b Completed Inpatient Waits by Trust Including Independent Sector Activity⁵, Quarter Ending 31st March 2007 – Quarter Ending 31st March 2008

Provider Trust	Total Number of Completed Inpatient Waits Commissioned by Health Service				
	31st March 2007	30th June 2007	30th September 2007	31st December 2007	31st March 2008
Belfast	21,318	21,371	19,899	21,097	21,069
Northern	6,270	6,076	6,602	6,313	5,817
South Eastern	7,006	7,001	6,999	7,128	7,000
Southern	6,396	6,784	6,320	6,653	6,717
Western	7,008	7,322	7,004	7,426	7,270
Total	47,998	48,554	46,824	48,617	47,873

Source: Health and Social Care Trusts

⁵ Refer to Technical Notes – points 14 & 16-17.

Outpatients

Headline Totals - Table 7

The number of patients waiting for a first outpatient appointment (including cancellations and deferrals) at the end of March 2008 stood at 72,957.

Over the quarter, comparing the end of March 2008 with the end of December 2007 (73,629), the total number has decreased by 672 (-0.9%).

Over the year, comparing the end of March 2008 with the end of March 2007 (102,621), the total number waiting decreased by 29,664 (-28.9%).

Excluding cancellations and deferrals, the quarterly increase and annual decrease were 0.8% and 28.6% respectively.

Table 7 Quarterly Outpatient Waiting Lists - March 2008⁶

Waiting for:	Quarter Ending March 2008	Change compared with end of previous quarter	Change compared with end same quarter - previous year
Excluding Cancellations and Deferrals	67,440	552	-26,994
Cancellations and Deferrals	5,517	-1,224	-2,670
Total Waiting	72,957	-672	-29,664

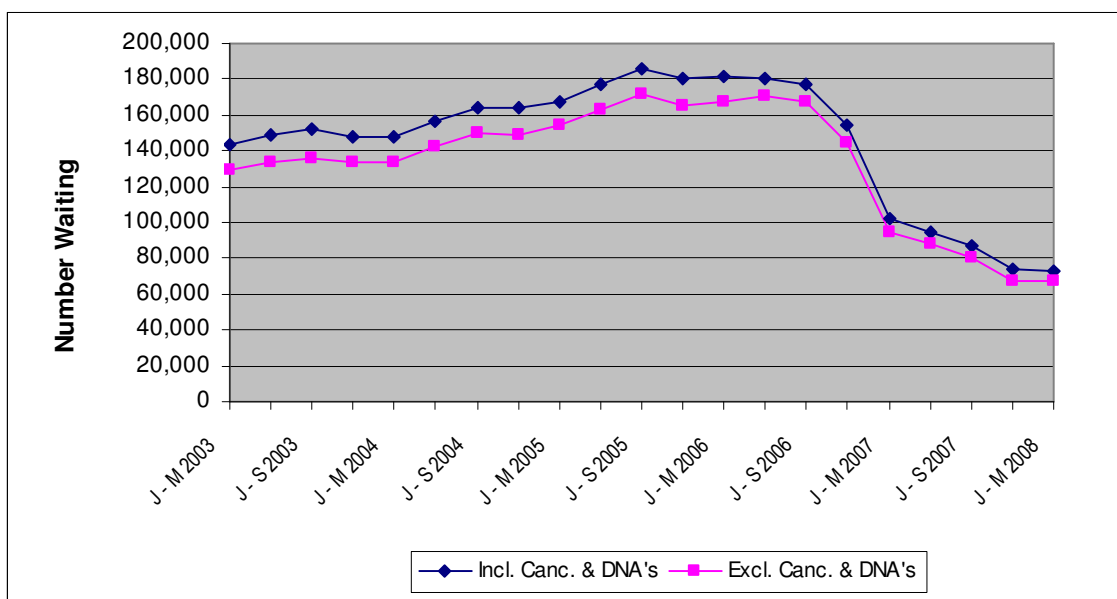
Source: Departmental Return CH3 parts 1 & 2

⁶ Refer to Technical Notes 18 - 23.

Trends

The total number of people waiting for a first outpatient appointment peaked in September 2005. There has been a downward trend since this peak and the outpatient waiting lists total has decreased in nine of the previous ten quarters.

Figure 2 Outpatients Waiting for a First Appointment (including and excluding cancellations and deferrals), Five Yearly Trends March 2003 – March 2008



Source: Departmental Return CH3 parts 1 & 2.

Outpatients Waiting More than 13 Weeks

At the end of March 2008, the number of patients waiting more than 13 weeks for a first outpatient appointment was 59, 0.1% of the total waiting.

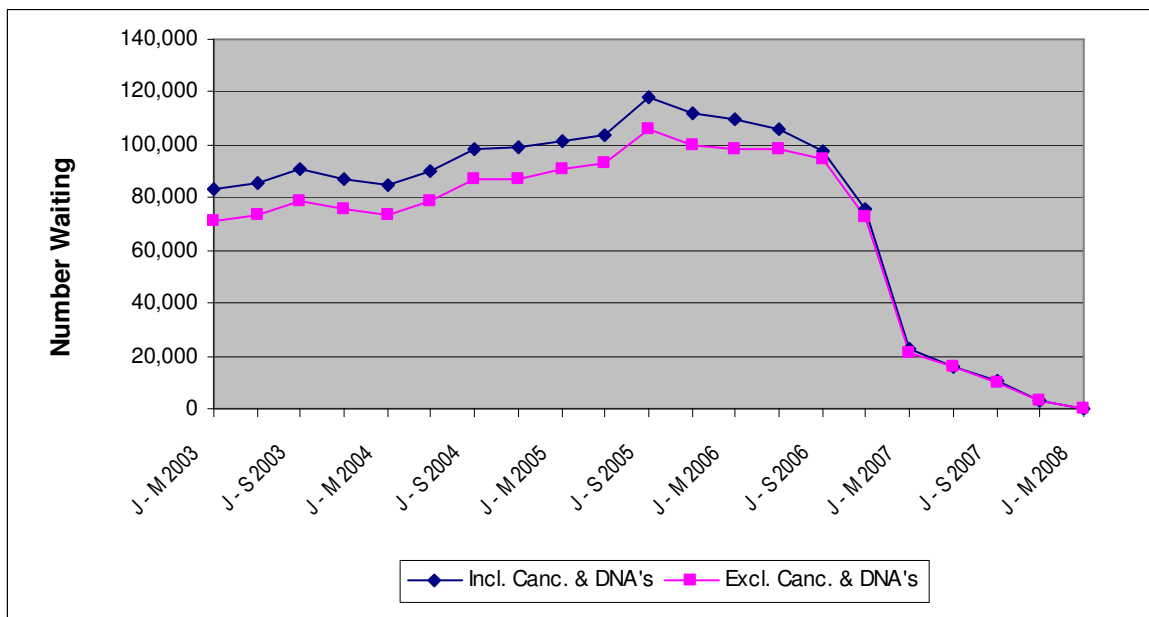
Table 8 Patients Waiting More than 13 Weeks⁷ - March 2008

Waiting for:	Quarter Ending March 2008	Change compared with end of previous quarter	Change compared with end same quarter - previous year
Excluding Cancellations and Deferrals	57	-2,627	-21,329
Cancellations and Deferrals	2	-219	-1,172
Total Waiting	59	-2,846	-22,501

Source: Departmental Return CH3 parts 1 & 2.

⁷ Refer to Technical Notes 18-22.

Figure 3 Outpatients waiting more than 13 Weeks for a First Appointment (including and excluding cancellations and deferrals), Five Yearly Trends March 2003 – March 2008⁷



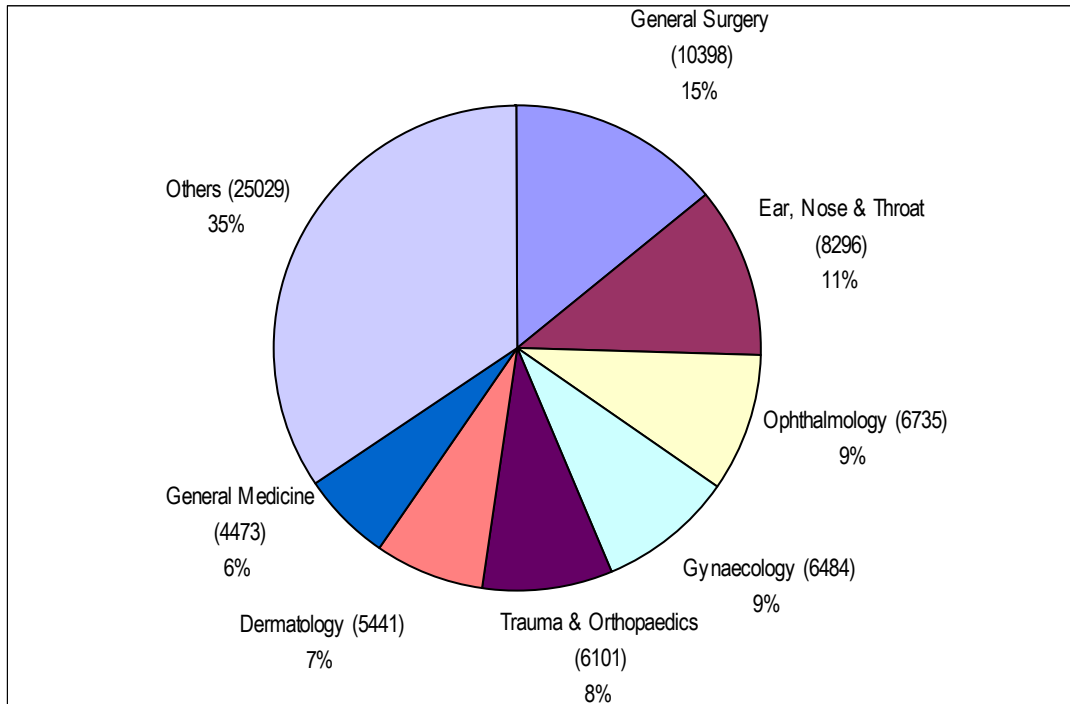
Source: Departmental Return CH3 Parts 1 & 2

⁷ Refer to Technical Notes 18-22.

Outpatients Waiting by Specialty

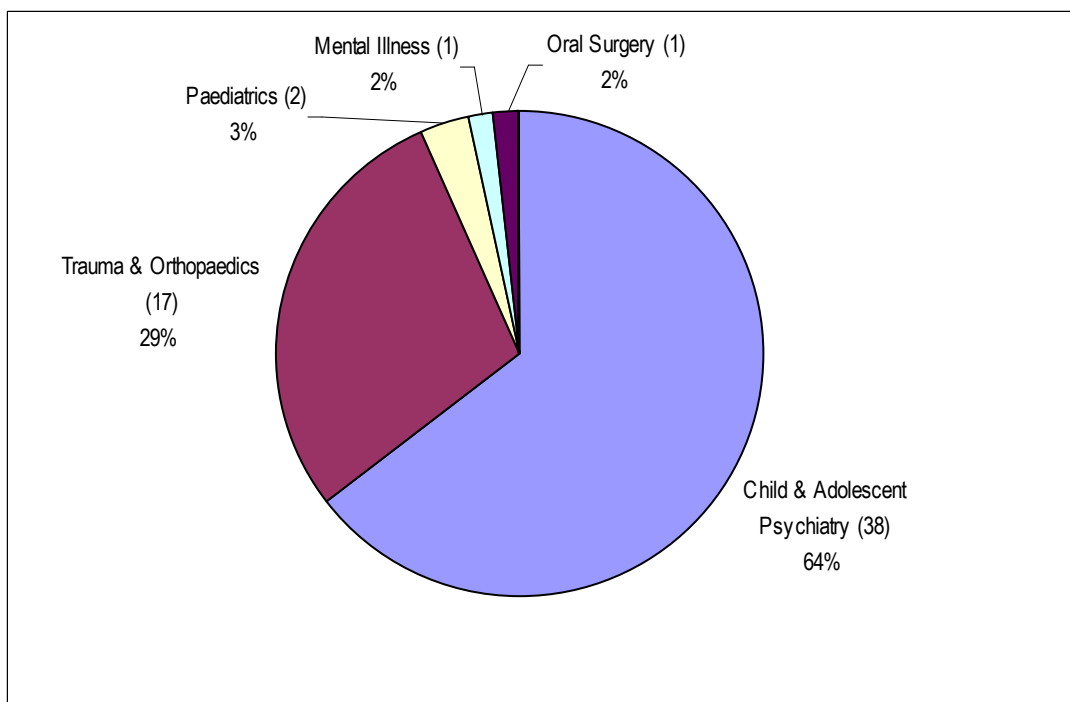
The majority of those waiting (65.0%) were within seven specialties: General Surgery; Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT); Ophthalmology; Gynaecology (Gynae); Trauma & Orthopaedics; Dermatology and General Medicine (Figure 4a). Figures represent the total number waiting for their first outpatient appointment during the March 2008 quarter including those who have cancelled or missed a previous appointment.

Figure 4a Outpatients – Total Waiters by Specialty at the end of March 2008



Source: Departmental Return CH3 Parts 1 & 2.

Figure 4b Outpatients – Patients Waiting More than 13 Weeks by Specialty at the end of March 2008



Source: Departmental Return CH3 Parts 1 & 2.

Outpatient Waiting Time by Specialty

Waiting times for outpatients by specialty are shown in Tables 9a and 9b. Overall 99.9% of those waiting for treatment were waiting less than 3 months.

Table 9a Number of Patients Waiting for a First Appointment by Weeks Waiting and Specialty – March 2008

Specialty	Patients Waiting for an Appointment by Weeks Waiting		Total Number of Patients Waiting
	0 -13	>13	
General Surgery	10,398	0	10,398
Ear, Nose & Throat	8,296	0	8,296
Ophthalmology	6,735	0	6,735
Gynaecology	6,484	0	6,484
Trauma & Orthopaedics	6,084	17	6,101
Dermatology	5,441	0	5,441
General Medicine	4,473	0	4,473
Paediatrics	3,064	2	3,066
Cardiology	2,288	0	2,288
Neurology	2,032	0	2,032
Mental Illness	1,767	1	1,768
Oral Surgery	1,611	1	1,612
Rheumatology	1,602	0	1,602
Urology	1,595	0	1,595
Gastroenterology	1,042	0	1,042
Restorative Dentistry	861	0	861
Obs & Gynae (Obstetrics)	847	0	847
Pain Management	830	0	830
Child & Adolescent Psychi	729	38	767
Geriatric Medicine	654	0	654
Other	6,065	0	6,065
All Specialties	72,898	59	72,957

Source: Departmental Return CH3 Parts 1 & 2

Table 9b Percentage of Patients Waiting for a First Appointment by Weeks Waiting and Specialty – March 2008

Specialty	Patients Waiting for an Appointment by Weeks Waiting	
	0 - 13	>13
General Surgery	100.0%	0.0%
Ear, Nose & Throat	100.0%	0.0%
Ophthalmology	100.0%	0.0%
Gynaecology	100.0%	0.0%
Trauma & Orthopaedics	99.7%	0.3%
Dermatology	100.0%	0.0%
General Medicine	100.0%	0.0%
Paediatrics	99.9%	0.1%
Cardiology	100.0%	0.0%
Neurology	100.0%	0.0%
Mental Illness	99.9%	0.1%
Oral Surgery	99.9%	0.1%
Rheumatology	100.0%	0.0%
Urology	100.0%	0.0%
Gastroenterology	100.0%	0.0%
Restorative Dentistry	100.0%	0.0%
Obs & Gynae (Obstetrics)	100.0%	0.0%
Pain Management	100.0%	0.0%
Child & Adolescent Psychiatry	95.0%	5.0%
Geriatric Medicine	100.0%	0.0%
Other	100.0%	0.0%
All Specialties	99.9%	0.1%

Source: Departmental Return CH3 Parts 1 & 2.

Outpatient Waiting Times by Provider Trust

Waiting times for outpatients by Trust are shown in Table 10.

Table 10 Number of Patients Waiting for a First Outpatient Appointment by Provider Trust and Weeks Waiting – March 2008⁸

Provider Trust	Patients Waiting for an Appointment by Weeks Waiting		Total Number of Patients Waiting
	0 - 13	>13	
Belfast	26,270	17	26,287
Northern	12,219	41	12,260
South Eastern	10,736	0	10,736
Southern	11,874	1	11,875
Western	11,799	0	11,799
Total	72,898	59	72,957

Source: Departmental Return CH3 Parts 1 & 2

⁸Refer to Technical Notes – points 14 & 18-23.

Outpatient Waiting Times by Programme of Care

Waiting times for a first outpatient appointment by programme of care are shown in Table 11. The vast majority (93.6%) of patients were awaiting their first outpatient appointment in the Acute Services Programme of Care.

Table 11 Number of Patients Waiting for a First Appointment by Weeks Waiting and Programme of Care – March 2008

Programme of Care	Patients Waiting for an Appointment by Weeks Waiting		Total Number of Patients Waiting
	0 - 13	>13	
Acute Services	68,251	20	68,271
Maternity & Child Health	847	0	847
Elderly Care	1,156	0	1,156
Mental Health	2,570	39	2,609
Learning Disability	74	0	74
All POCs	72,898	59	72,957

Source: Departmental Return CH3 Parts 1 & 2

Completed Outpatient Waits – March 2008

Waiting times for completed outpatient waits, for patients treated within Health Service hospitals in Northern Ireland, are shown in Table 12. A total of 104,041 patients received a first outpatient appointment within Health Service hospitals (excluding those who had previously cancelled or not attended a previous appointment) during the March 2008 quarter. 90.6% of these patients attended their first appointment within 3 months of being placed on the waiting list and 99.7% received their first outpatient appointment within 6 months. Including patients who have cancelled, or did not attend a previous appointment, the total number of patients that attended a first outpatient appointment within Health Service hospitals in Northern Ireland during the quarter was 112,140.

Table 12 Completed Outpatient Waits for First Appointment⁹

Quarter	Time Waiting in Months				Total Number of Completed Outpatient Waits	
	0 - 2	3 - 5	6 - 8	9+	Excluding patients who had cancelled or did not attend a previous appointment	Including patients who had cancelled or did not attend a previous appointment
J - M 2005	68.4%	16.4%	7.0%	8.2%	86,944	94,865
A - J 2005	70.1%	15.6%	6.9%	7.4%	91,489	99,698
J - S 2005	70.8%	16.0%	5.7%	7.5%	82,721	92,047
O - D 2005	67.7%	15.9%	7.5%	8.9%	91,969	101,037
J - D 2005	69.2%	16.0%	6.8%	8.0%	353,123	387,647
J - M 2006	68.0%	15.6%	7.6%	8.8%	91,695	101,249
A - J 2006	68.3%	15.0%	7.2%	9.5%	90,531	99,418
J - S 2006	63.9%	16.0%	7.3%	12.7%	90,716	100,769
O - D 2006	61.0%	17.8%	9.7%	11.5%	104,266	113,927
J - D 2006	65.2%	16.2%	8.0%	10.7%	377,208	415,363
J - M 2007	61.4%	24.0%	8.6%	6.0%	110,712	121,104
A - J 2007	70.9%	27.2%	1.9%	0.1%	105,202	114,317
J - S 2007	71.7%	27.3%	0.8%	0.2%	102,848	110,509
O - D 2007	79.0%	20.5%	0.4%	0.0%	109,135	116,634
J - D 2007	70.7%	24.7%	3.0%	1.6%	427,897	462,564
J - M 2008	90.6%	9.1%	0.2%	0.0%	104,041	112,140

Source: Departmental Return CH4

⁹Refer to Technical Notes – points 24 & 25

Completed Outpatient Waits including Independent Sector Activity– March 2008

During the March 2008 quarter, a number of patients attended a first outpatient appointment, commissioned by the Health Service, within the Independent Sector. Estimates of the number of patients attending a first outpatient appointment, within the Independent Sector have been provided by commissioning Trusts.

It is estimated that approximately 3,699 Health Service patients attended a first outpatient appointment, within the Independent Sector, during the quarter ending March 2008. When this number is combined with that for outpatients attending a first appointment in Health Service hospitals during the same period, it is estimated that approximately 115,839 outpatients attended a first appointment in Northern Ireland for an assessment commissioned by the Health Service.

Table 13a Completed Outpatient Waits by Trust including Independent Sector Activity¹⁰

Provider Trust	Number of Completed Outpatient Waits within Health Service Hospitals	Number of Completed Outpatient Waits in Independent Sector	Total Number of Completed Outpatient Waits Commissioned by Health Service
Belfast	42,796	1,142	43,938
Northern	15,186	432	15,618
South Eastern	18,021	1,110	19,131
Southern	14,402	272	14,674
Western	21,735	743	22,478
Total Treated	112,140	3,699	115,839

Source: Health and Social Care Trusts

¹⁰Refer to Technical Notes – points 14 & 26-27.

Completed Outpatient Waits including Independent Sector Activity, March 2007 - March 2008

Table 13b has been included to reflect the total completed outpatient waits in the Health Service for the past five quarters.

Table 13b Completed Outpatient Waits by Trust Including Independent Sector Activity¹⁰, Quarter Ending 31st March 2007 – Quarter Ending 31st March 2008

Provider Trust	Total Number of Completed Outpatient Waits Commissioned by Health Service				
	31st March 2007	30th June 2007	30th September 2007	31st December 2007	31st March 2008
Belfast	55,666	41,909	39,827	45,196	43,938
Northern	19,450	15,829	17,555	18,053	15,618
South Eastern	26,748	19,246	17,675	20,827	19,131
Southern	19,798	16,980	16,217	16,369	14,674
Western	25,071	24,393	24,970	23,541	22,478
Total	146,733	118,357	116,244	123,986	115,839

Source: Health and Social Care Trusts

¹⁰Refer to Technical Notes – points 14 & 26-27.

Diagnostic Services

Tables 14 -18 provide details of the number of people waiting for the 16 selected diagnostic services, carried out at hospitals in Northern Ireland, and covered by the maximum waiting time Ministerial target for 2007/08¹¹.

Headline Totals – Table 14

The total number of patients waiting for one of the 16 selected diagnostic services at hospitals in Northern Ireland at the end of March 2008 stood at 31,308, a decrease of 1,275 (-3.9%) on the position at 31st December 2007.

Table 14 Quarterly Diagnostic Services Waiting List – March 2008¹¹

Diagnostic Service:	Number of Patients Waiting Quarter Ending March 2008	Change compared with the end of the previous quarter
Imaging (excluding Interventional Imaging)		
Magnetic Resonance Imaging	3,147	-228
Computerised Tomography	3,000	571
Non-obstetric ultrasound	6,625	-557
Barium Studies	1,303	-304
DEXA Scan	974	-300
Radio-Nuclide Imaging	704	-52
Physiological Measurement		
Audiology - pure tone audiometry	577	138
Cardiology - echocardiography	3,075	51
Cardiology - perfusion studies	310	-42
Neurophysiology - peripheral neurophysiology	922	-627
Respiratory physiology - sleep studies	307	53
Urodynamics - pressures and flows	384	-139
Day case Endoscopy		
Colonoscopy	2,650	194
Flexi sigmoidoscopy	1,430	-18
Cystoscopy	1,647	-51
Gastroscopy	4,253	36
Other Endoscopy		
Colonoscopy	0	0
Flexi sigmoidoscopy	0	0
Cystoscopy	0	0
Gastroscopy	0	0
Total waiting for selected diagnostic tests	31,308	-1,275

Source: Departmental Return SDR1

¹¹Refer to Technical Notes – points 28-33.

Table 15 Diagnostic Services Waiting Times by Diagnostic Test and Weeks Waiting – March 2008¹¹

Diagnostic Test	Patients Waiting for a Diagnostic Test by Weeks Waiting					Total Number of Patients Waiting
	0 - 6 weeks	6 - 13 weeks	13 - 21 weeks	21- 26 weeks	26 weeks +	
Magnetic Resonance Imaging	2,153	994	0	0	0	3,147
Computerised Tomography	2,382	618	0	0	0	3,000
Non Obstetric Ultrasound	4,958	1,667	0	0	0	6,625
Barium Studies	1,022	281	0	0	0	1,303
DEXA Scan	610	364	0	0	0	974
Radio Nuclide Imaging	593	111	0	0	0	704
Audiology - Pure Tone	356	221	0	0	0	577
Cardiology - Echocardiography	2,250	825	0	0	0	3,075
Cardiology - Perfusion Studies	234	76	0	0	0	310
Neurophysiology - Peripheral Neurophysiology	481	441	0	0	0	922
Respiratory Physiology - Sleep Studies	244	63	0	0	0	307
Urodynamics - Pressures & daycase colonoscopy	204	180	0	0	0	384
daycase flexi sigmoidoscopy	1,158	1,021	471	0	0	2,650
daycase cystoscopy	633	584	213	0	0	1,430
daycase gastroscopy	753	555	339	0	0	1,647
Total waiting for selected diagnostic tests	20,006	9,658	1,644	0	0	31,308

Source: Departmental Return SDR1

¹¹Refer to Technical Notes – points 28-33.

Waiting times for diagnostic services by Trust are shown in Table 16.

Table 16 Diagnostic Services Waiting Times by Provider Trust – March 2008¹²

Provider Trust	Patients Waiting for a Diagnostic Test by Weeks Waiting					Total Number of Patients Waiting
	0 - 6 weeks	6 - 13 weeks	13 - 21 weeks	21- 26 weeks	26 weeks +	
Belfast	6,990	3,935	557	0	0	11,482
Northern	3,418	1,437	387	0	0	5,242
South Eastern	3,076	1,377	57	0	0	4,510
Southern	3,723	1,563	411	0	0	5,697
Western	2,799	1,346	232	0	0	4,377
Total	20,006	9,658	1,644	0	0	31,308

Source: Departmental Return SDR1

¹²Refer to Technical Notes – points 14 & 28-33.

Diagnostic Services Waiting over 13/21 Weeks

The 2007/08 Ministerial target for diagnostic services states that by 31st March 2008, no patient should be waiting more than 13 weeks for any of the 16 selected diagnostic services (except for day case endoscopies when no patient should be waiting more than 21 weeks at 31st March 2008).

There were no patients waiting over 13 weeks for any of the 16 selected diagnostic services (except for day case endoscopies), a decrease of 1,112 from the quarter ending 31st December 2007.

Table 17 Selected Diagnostic Tests – Over 13 Weeks¹¹

Diagnostic Test	Total Number of Patients Waiting	Total Number of Patients Waiting over 13 weeks	Change compared with the end of the previous quarter
Magnetic Resonance Imaging	3,147	0	-262
Computerised Tomography	3,000	0	-36
Non Obstetric Ultrasound	6,625	0	-82
Barium Studies	1,303	0	-19
DEXA Scan	974	0	-46
Radio Nuclide Imaging	704	0	0
Audiology - Pure Tone Audiometry	577	0	0
Cardiology - Echocardiography	3,075	0	-53
Cardiology - Perfusion Studies	310	0	-7
Neurophysiology - Peripheral			
Neurophysiology	922	0	-492
Respiratory Physiology - Sleep Studies	307	0	-30
Urodynamics - Pressures & Flows	384	0	-85
Total waiting	21,328	0	-1,112

Source: Departmental Return SDR1

¹¹Refer to Technical Notes – points 28-33.

There were no patients waiting over 21 weeks for a day case endoscopy at the 31st March 2008, a decrease of six from the quarter ending 31st December 2007.

Table 18 Day Case Endoscopies – Over 21 Weeks

Diagnostic Test	Total Number of Patients Waiting	Total Number of Patients Waiting over 21 weeks	Change compared with the end of the previous quarter
Day case Colonoscopy	2,650	0	0
Day case Flexi Sigmoidoscopy	1,430	0	0
Day case Cystoscopy	1,647	0	-6
Day case Gastroscopy	4,253	0	0
Total Waiting	9,980	0	-6

Source: Departmental Return SDR1

¹¹Refer to Technical Notes – points 28-33.

Technical Notes

1. The sources for the data contained in this release are the DHSSPS Inpatient Waiting Time Dataset and Departmental Returns CH2, CH3, CH4 and SDR1. These returns collect information from Hospital Trusts on a quarterly basis.
2. Hospital Information Branch initiated a National Statistics consultation on proposals to change the methodology used in compiling official inpatient waiting time information in Northern Ireland. The current ministerial target for inpatient/day cases states that, by 31st March 2008, no patient should be waiting more than 21 weeks for inpatient admission. The successful completion of the National Statistics consultation proposals and the transition to patient level data, contained in the DHSSPS Inpatient Waiting Times Dataset, enables the 21 week target to be monitored.
3. From the quarter ending 30th June 2007, the Departmental Return CH1, which collected the number of patients waiting for inpatient (ordinary and day case) admissions, has been replaced by the DHSSPS Inpatient Waiting Time Dataset, a patient level extract from the Trust Patient Administration Systems (PAS). Data derived from the respective methodologies are not directly comparable. As a result, it is not possible to provide a year on year comparison for the total number of inpatients waiting.
4. Trust based information (DHSSPS Inpatient Waiting Time Dataset, CH2, CH3, CH4 and SDR1) returns include all patients living outside Northern Ireland and all privately funded patients waiting for treatment in Health Service hospitals in Northern Ireland.
5. The total number of patients waiting for inpatient treatment at 31st December 2007 has been revised to 38,034, to include 271 patients waiting to be seen by an Independent Sector provider within the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust, which were not on the DHSSPS Inpatient Waiting Times Dataset at the end of December. This includes 75 patients waiting for ordinary admission and 196 patients waiting for day case admission within the Plastics and General Medicine specialties. All of these patients were waiting less than 21 weeks.
6. Due to administrative difficulties, it has not been possible to differentiate a cohort of 612 patients waiting within Belfast Health and Social Care Trusts for Inpatient Trauma and Orthopaedic treatment in the Independent Sector at the end of March 2008 into the 'ordinary admission' and 'day case' categories. Hospital Information Branch have analysed the case mix of patients waiting for inpatient admission in the T & O specialty in the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust in previous quarters and estimate that approximately 70% of these patients were waiting for ordinary admission, with approximately 30% waiting for day case admission. It is therefore estimated that 429 of these patients were waiting for ordinary admission and 183 were waiting for day case admission. These figures are included within the inpatient waiting time position.
7. For Tables 2a, 2b and 3 and for Figure 2b, inpatient waiting time relates to the number of completed weeks a patient has been waiting for inpatient admission. For example, a patient waiting exactly 6 weeks would be included in the 0-6 week timeband and a patient waiting exactly 6 weeks and 1 day would be included in the >6-13 (greater than 6 weeks but waiting no longer than 13 weeks) timeband.

8. The current ministerial target for inpatient waiting times states that, by 31st March 2008, no patient should be waiting more than 21 weeks for inpatient admission. Patients waiting 'more than 21 weeks' include all patients in the >21-26 week (patients waiting more than 21 weeks but waiting no longer than 26 weeks) and >26 week (patients waiting more than 26 weeks) timebands .
9. Inpatient waiting list data comprises the number of patients waiting for ordinary admission to hospital and the number of patients waiting for day case treatment.
10. Ordinary admissions 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 ordinary admission. Day cases are not included.
11. 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 ordinary admission.
12. The waiting list inpatient figures presented include people waiting to be admitted as inpatients either as day cases or ordinary admissions. They do not include:
 - Patients admitted as emergency cases;
 - Outpatients;
 - Patients undergoing a planned programme of treatment e.g. a series of admissions for chemotherapy;
 - Maternity (specialties 510 and 520);
 - Patients already in hospitals but included on other waiting lists;
 - Patients who are temporarily suspended from waiting lists.
13. Waiting time begins from the date the clinician decided to admit the patient. Patients subsequently offered a date but unable to attend have their waiting times calculated from the most recent date offered. These are known as CNA's (Could Not Attend) and are included in the total number waiting.
14. In accordance with the Review of Public Administration, with effect from the 1st April 2007, five new integrated Health and Social Care Trusts (Belfast, Northern, South Eastern, Southern and Western) replaced the previous eighteen provider Trusts in Northern Ireland. Where applicable, tables have been presented based on the new Trust Areas.
15. Waiting times for completed inpatient waits relate to the entire time period between the initial decision to admit and the date of admission, including periods of medical suspension. The completed waiting time for patients who self deferred or failed to attend on a previously arranged admission date are not included in these estimates.
16. The number of patients that received inpatient treatment, commissioned by the Health Service, in the Independent Sector are provided in Tables 6a and 6b. These figures have been provided for each transferring Health and Social Care Trust (Health Trust responsible for the patients 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 inpatient waits during each quarter.

17. The number of patients that received inpatient treatment, commissioned by the Health Service, in the Independent Sector during the period 1st October 2007 – 31st December 2007 has been revised from 2,183 to 2,387. This is due to a revision received from the Western Health and Social Care Trust.
18. Outpatients waiters are defined as patients still waiting for their first outpatient appointment at the end of the quarter. An outpatient appointment is to enable a patient to see a consultant, a member of his firm or locum for such a member, in respect of one referral.
19. Outpatient waiting list figures presented do not include maternity specialties 510 and 520.
20. From the 1st October 2007, Integrated Clinical Assessment and Treatment Services (ICATS) were introduced for orthopaedic patients referred for first outpatient assessment in the Trauma & Orthopaedic specialty. ICATS are provided by integrated multidisciplinary teams of Health Service Professionals, including GPs with a special interest, specialist nurses and Allied Health Professionals. They are provided in a variety of community and secondary care settings and they include assessment, treatment, diagnostic and advisory services. The introduction of these services is aimed at reducing outpatient waiting times by referring to hospitals, only those patients who will benefit from seeing a consultant. Waiting times for ICATS appointments are subject to existing outpatient waiting times targets i.e. no patient to be waiting more than 13 weeks by 31st March 2008.
21. Due to technical difficulties it is not currently possible to accurately report on the total number of patients waiting for a first ICATS appointment at 31 March 2008. The Department can confirm that no patient was waiting more than 13 weeks for a first ICATS appointment at 31 March 2008.
22. Following a recent revision in policy, patients who either cancel or fail to attend an outpatient appointment have their waiting time reset to either the date on which the appointment was cancelled (CNA) or the date on which they did not attend (DNA) the appointment.
23. The number of patients waiting for a first outpatient appointment at the end of December 2007 has been revised from 73,637 to 73,629 due to an amendments received from the Belfast and Southern Health and Social Care Trusts.
24. A number of Health and Social Care Trusts have experienced technical difficulties in estimating the exact length of time a patient had waited for a first outpatient assessment. Consequently, some completed outpatient waiting times may not be reflective of the exact waiting time the patient had waited for a first outpatient assessment.
25. The number of patients that received an outpatient assessment, commissioned by the Health Service, during the period 1st October 2007 – 31st December 2007 has been revised from 116,547 to 116,634. This is due to a revision received from the Northern Health and Social Care Trust.
26. The number of patients that received an outpatient assessment, commissioned by the Health Service, in the Independent Sector is provided in Tables 13a and 13b. These figures have been provided for each transferring Health and Social Care Trust (Trust responsible for the patients 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.

27. The number of patients that received an outpatient assessment, commissioned by the Health Service, in the Independent Sector during the period 1st October 2007 – 31st December 2007 has been revised from 6,973 to 7,352. This is due to revisions received from the Belfast, South Eastern and Western Health and Social Care Trusts.
28. The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety commenced the collection of waiting times information for diagnostic services for the quarter ending 31st December 2007, following a pilot exercise for the quarter ending 30th September 2007. The source for the data is the Information Return SDR1. This return will be collected from Hospital Trusts on a quarterly basis. The data are not National Statistics and they have had limited validation by the Department, however they have been included to provide users with a comprehensive view of waiting times for the selected diagnostic services subject to the 2007/08 Ministerial target.
29. A diagnostic service provides an examination, test or procedure used to identify a person's disease or condition and which allows a medical diagnosis to be made.
30. The Ministerial target for diagnostic waiting times states by 31st March 2008, no patient should wait more than 13 weeks for any of the 16 selected diagnostic services (except day case endoscopies for which patients should wait no longer than 21 weeks). The 16 selected services are: Magnetic Resonance Imaging; Computerised Tomography; Non-Obstetric Ultrasound; Barium Studies; DEXA Scan; Radio-Nuclide Imaging; Pure Tone Audiometry; Echocardiography; Perfusion Studies; Peripheral Neurophysiology; Sleep Studies; Urodynamics Pressures and Flows; Colonoscopy; Flexi Sigmoidoscopy; Cystoscopy; Gastroscopy.
31. The diagnostic waiting time target relates to all tests with a diagnostic element. Included are tests that are part diagnostic and subsequently part therapeutic. A therapeutic procedure is defined as a procedure which involves actual treatment of a person's disease, condition or injury. Purely therapeutic procedures are excluded from the diagnostic waiting times target. Patients currently admitted to a hospital bed and waiting for an emergency procedure, patients waiting for a planned procedure and patients waiting for procedures as part of screening programme are also excluded from the waiting times target.
32. The waiting time for a diagnostic service commences on the date on which the referral for the service is received by the Health Care provider and stops on the date on which the test is performed.
33. A number of the diagnostic services reported on the SDR 1 return are managed as day cases. As such, they will be included in both the inpatient and diagnostic services waiting time figures. Due to the risk of multiple counting, these two sets of data should not be combined to give an estimate of the total number of patients waiting for either inpatient admission or a diagnostic service.
34. Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety policy is to publish revised figures with subsequent statistical releases unless it is decided that the magnitude of the change merits earlier notification.
35. Figures relating to the quarter ending 30th June 2008 will be released on Thursday, 4th September 2008.

36. For general enquiries about National Statistics, contact the National Statistics Public Service on

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You can also find National Statistics on the internet – Go to www.statistics.gov.uk.

Additional Information

Further information on waiting lists in Northern Ireland is available from:

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