

# Corporate Monitoring Information Release

Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety  
An Roinn Sláinte, Seirbhísí Sóisialta agus Sábháilteacht Phoiblí

13<sup>th</sup> June 2000

## Northern Ireland Waiting Lists – March 2000

This information release gives details of the number of people waiting for inpatient or outpatient treatment at hospitals in Northern Ireland at the end of March 2000, the most recent quarter for which figures are available.

### Inpatients

#### Headline Totals – Table 1

The total number of patients waiting to be admitted to hospitals in Northern Ireland at the end of March 2000 stood at 47,323.

Over the quarter, comparing the end of March 2000 with the end of December 1999 (46,090), the total number waiting has increased by 1,233 (2.7%).

Over the year, comparing the end of March 2000 with the end of March 1999 (44,868), the total number waiting has increased by 2,455 (5.5%).

**Table 1: Quarterly Waiting Lists – March 2000**

Waiting for:	Quarter ending March 2000	Change compared with end previous quarter	Change compared with end same quarter – previous year
Ordinary admissions	24,692	+ 548	+ 684
Day case admissions	22,631	+ 685	+ 1,771
Total Waiting	47,323	+ 1,233	+ 2,455

Source: CHI

**Detailed notes and definitions are shown in the attached Notes to Editors.**



#### A National Statistics Publication

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## 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 47,323 people waiting for admission to hospital at the end of March 2000, 24,692 (52.2%) were waiting for ordinary admission and 22,631 (47.8%) were waiting for day case admission (Table 1).

Since the end of December 1999, the number of cases waiting for ordinary admission has increased by 548 (2.3%) and the number waiting for day case admission has increased by 685 (3.1%).

In comparison with March 1999, the number of cases waiting for ordinary admission has increased by 684 (2.8%) and the number waiting for day case admission has increased by 1,771 (8.5%).

### Excess Waiters<sup>1</sup> – Table 2

The number of excess waiters at the end of March 2000 stood at 5,293 or 11.2% of the total waiting.

Over the quarter, comparing the end of March 2000 with the end of December 1999, the number of excess waiters increased by 12 (<+1%).

Over the year, comparing the end of March 2000 with the end of March 1999, the numbers of excess waiters increased by 1,179 (28.7%).

**Table 2** Excess Waiters<sup>1</sup> – March 2000

Waiting for:	Quarter ending March 2000	Change compared with end previous quarter	Change compared with end same quarter – previous year
Ordinary admissions	3,899	+ 151	+ 950
Day case admissions	1,394	- 139	+ 229
Total Waiting	5,293	+ 12	+ 1,179

<sup>1</sup>See Notes to Editors (paragraph 5) for definition of Excess Waiters.

Source: CHI

## Peak Figures

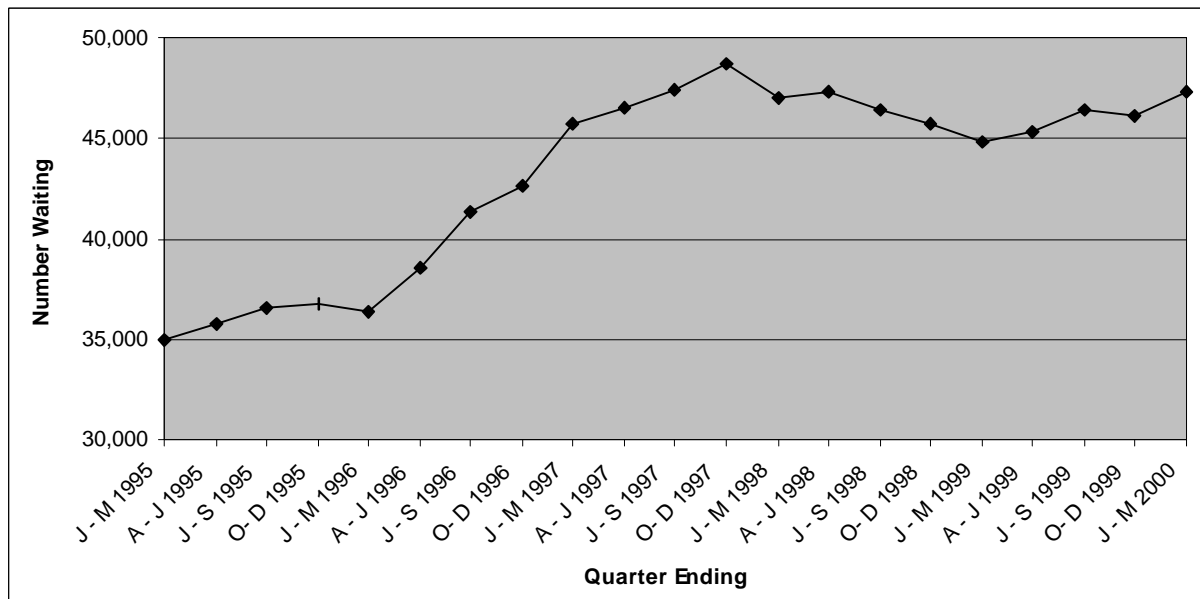
The end of March 2000 total of 47,323 on the inpatient waiting list represents a fall of 1,417 (2.9%) compared with the peak waiting list figure of 48,740 (end December 1997).

Similarly, the number of excess waiters has decreased from a peak of 6,595 at the end of December 1997 by 1,302 (19.7%) to 5,293 at the end of March 2000.

## Trends

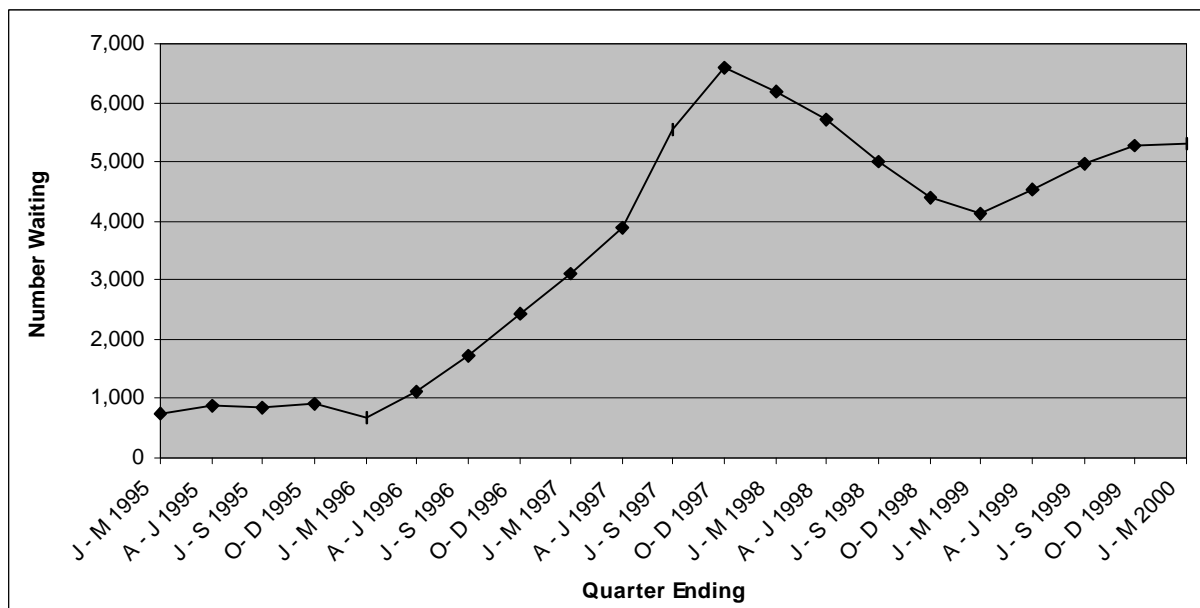
Over the past five years both the total numbers waiting and the numbers of excess waiters were on a generally upward trend until December 1997. Since then the total waiting was on a generally downward trend apart from the June/September 1999 quarters (Figure 1). Excess waiters have been rising steadily since the March 1999 quarter (Figure 2).

**Figure 1 Quarterly waiting lists – Five yearly trends March 1995 –March 2000**



Source: CH1

**Figure 2 Excess Waiters<sup>1</sup> - Five yearly trends March 1995 –March 2000**



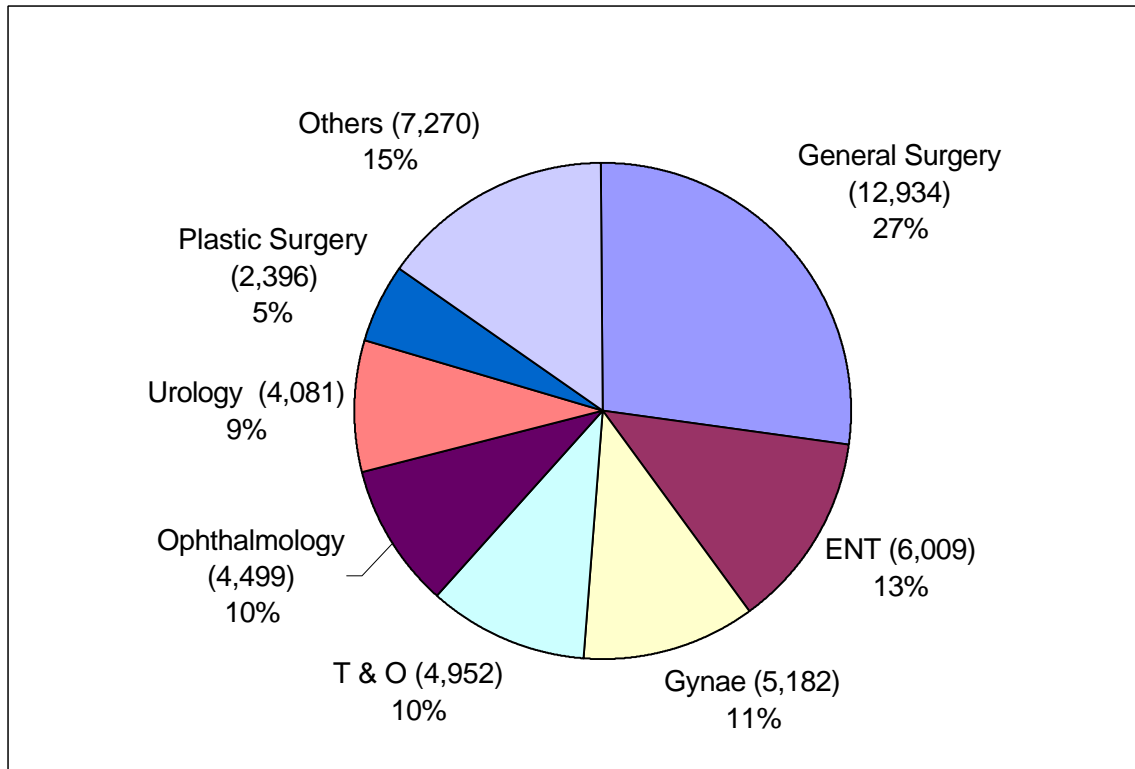
<sup>1</sup>See Notes to Editors (paragraph 5) for definition of Excess Waiters.

Source: CH1

## Inpatients Waiting by Specialty

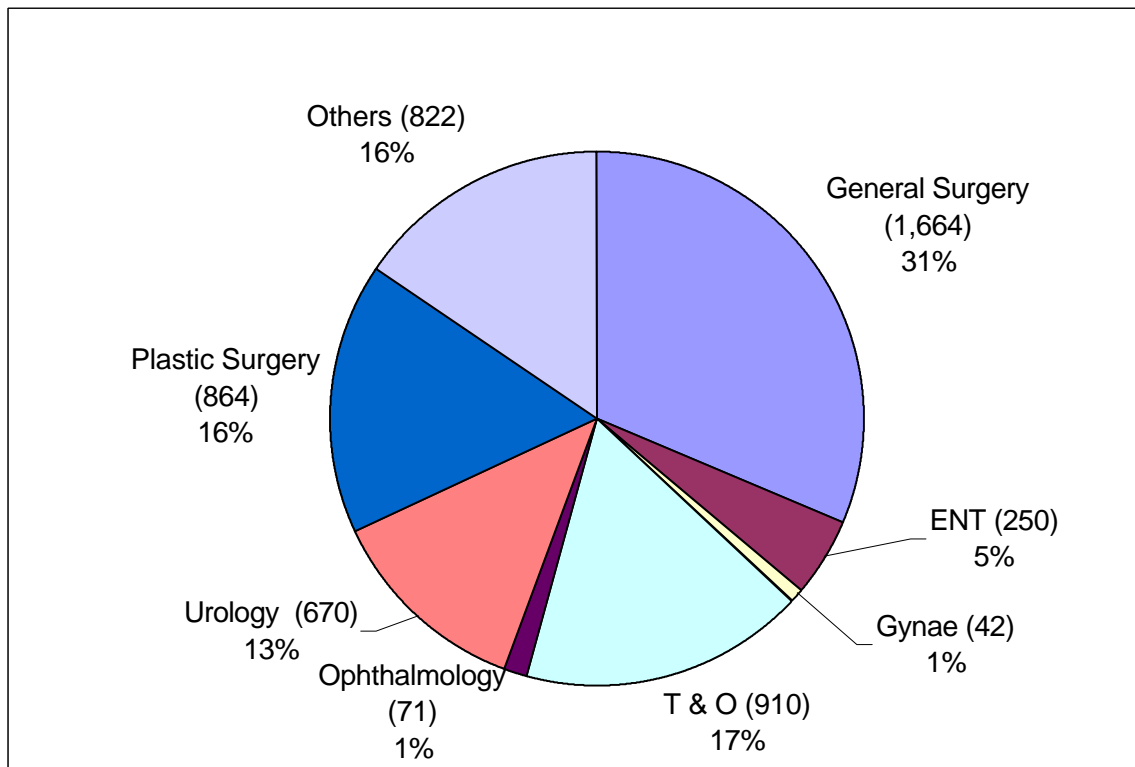
The overwhelming majority of those waiting (85%) were within seven specialties: General Surgery; ENT; Gynaecology; Trauma & Orthopaedics; Ophthalmology; Urology and Plastic Surgery (Figure 3a). Corresponding figures for excess waiters are shown in Figure 3b.

**Figure 3a Inpatients - Total Waiters by Specialty at the end of March 2000**



Source: CHI

**Figure 3b Inpatients – Excess Waiters<sup>1</sup> by Specialty at the end of March 2000**



<sup>1</sup>See Notes to Editors (paragraph 5) for definition of Excess Waiters.

Source: CHI

## Inpatient Completed Waits

Waiting times for completed inpatient waits are shown in Table 3. A total of 35,666 inpatients were admitted to hospital (excluding those who had previously refused an offer of attendance) during the March 2000 quarter.

**Table 3 Completed Inpatient Waits**

Time Waiting in Months (Percentage of total waits in each time band)						
Quarter	0-2	3-11	12-17	18-23	24+	Total
J – M 1997	78.1%	18.5%	2.7%	0.5%	0.3%	35,578
A – J 1997	76.8%	19.5%	2.8%	0.6%	0.3%	36,029
J – S 1997	76.3%	19.3%	2.9%	1.0%	0.4%	32,245
O – D 1997	76.7%	18.4%	3.2%	1.3%	0.5%	36,495
J – M 1998	73.8%	19.6%	4.0%	1.6%	1.0%	38,848
A – J 1998	74.5%	19.9%	3.1%	1.2%	1.2%	40,637
J – S 1998	73.5%	21.1%	2.9%	1.2%	1.2%	34,067
O – D 1998	75.1%	19.6%	3.2%	1.0%	1.1%	37,192
J – M 1999	75.5%	19.8%	2.9%	0.8%	1.0%	38,185
A – J 1999	75.6%	20.0%	3.0%	0.7%	0.8%	36,171
J – S 1999	75.8%	20.2%	2.7%	0.7%	0.6%	33,518
O – D 1999	77.0%	18.7%	2.7%	0.8%	0.7%	35,765
J – M 2000	75.4%	20.1%	3.0%	0.8%	0.7%	35,666

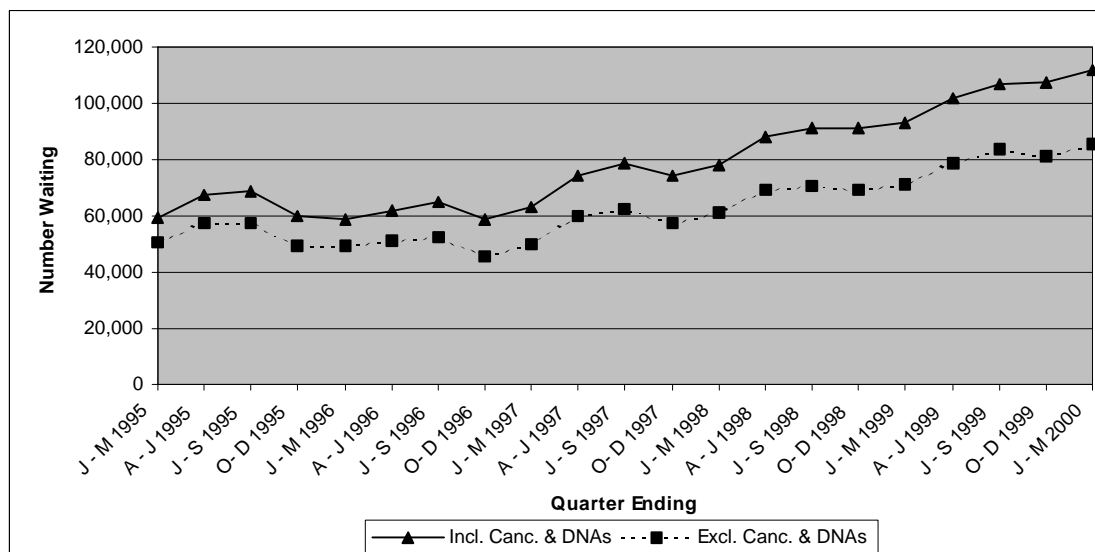
Source CH2: Part 1

# Outpatients

## Headline Totals

The numbers of patients waiting for admission as outpatients (including cancellations and deferrals) at the end of March 2000 stood at 111,845, representing an increase of 4,401 (+4.1%) over the quarter and an increase of 18,552 (+19.9%) compared with the same quarter in the previous year. Corresponding quarterly and annual changes (excluding cancellations and deferrals) were 5.5% and 19.9% respectively. Apart from falls in the December quarters, outpatient waiting lists have been on a generally upward trend for more than two years (Figure 4).

**Figure 4 Outpatients Waiting for a First Appointment (including and excluding cancellations and deferrals) March 1995 – March 2000**



Source: CH3 Parts 1&2.

## Outpatient Completed Waits

Waiting times for completed outpatient waits are shown in Table 4. During the March 2000 quarter a total of 83,981 outpatients attended their first appointment without having cancelled or missed a previous appointment.

**Table 4 Completed Outpatient Waits for First Appointment**

Quarter	Time Waiting in Months					Total
	(Percentage of total waits in each time band)					
	0-2	3-11	12-17	18-23	24+	
J – M 1997	87.1%	12.3%	0.5%	0.0%	0.1%	74,296
A – J 1997	87.4%	11.6%	0.9%	0.1%	0.0%	75,299
J – S 1997	82.7%	16.3%	0.9%	0.1%	0.0%	72,137
O– D 1997	81.9%	17.1%	0.9%	0.1%	0.0%	79,547
J – M 1998	82.8%	16.3%	0.7%	0.2%	0.0%	78,694
A – J 1998	82.9%	16.5%	0.4%	0.2%	0.1%	78,980
J – S 1998	78.8%	20.6%	0.4%	0.1%	0.0%	73,141
O– D 1998	79.4%	20.0%	0.4%	0.1%	0.1%	83,321
J – M 1999	79.9%	19.2%	0.6%	0.3%	0.1%	83,143
A – J 1999	80.9%	18.3%	0.6%	0.1%	0.1%	77,691
J – S 1999	77.3%	21.7%	0.8%	0.2%	0.1%	75,075
O– D 1999	76.5%	22.4%	0.8%	0.2%	0.1%	82,658
J – M 2000*	77.2%	21.7%	0.9%	0.1%	0.1%	83,981

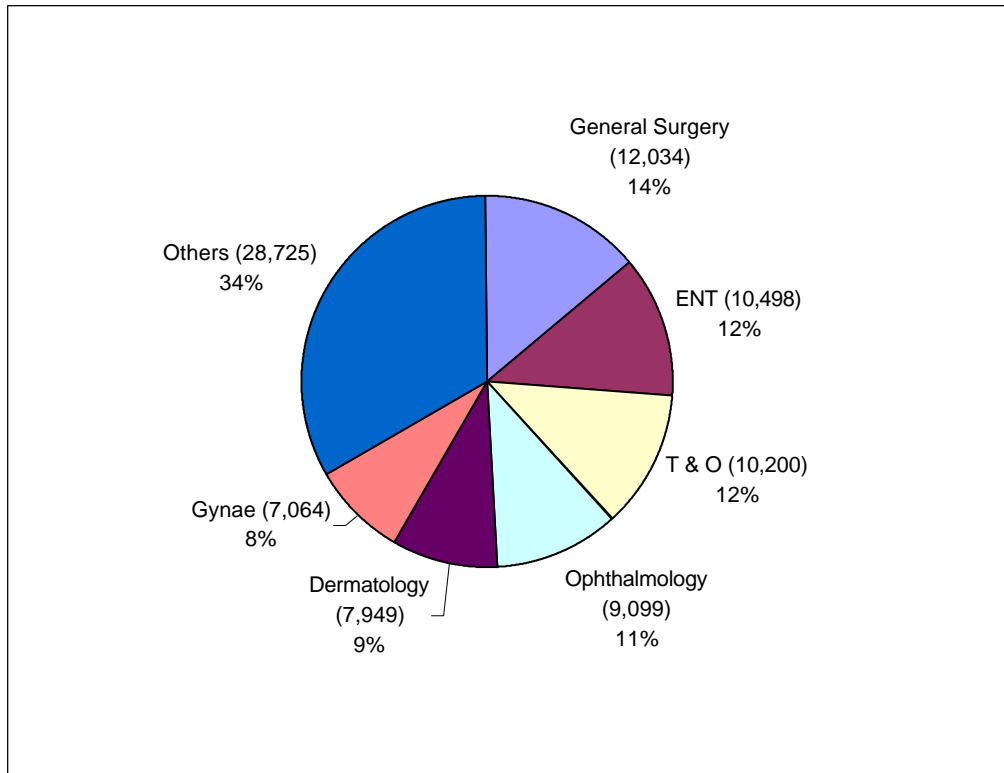
Source: CH4 Part1

\* Estimated figures – See note 14

## Outpatients Waiting by Specialty

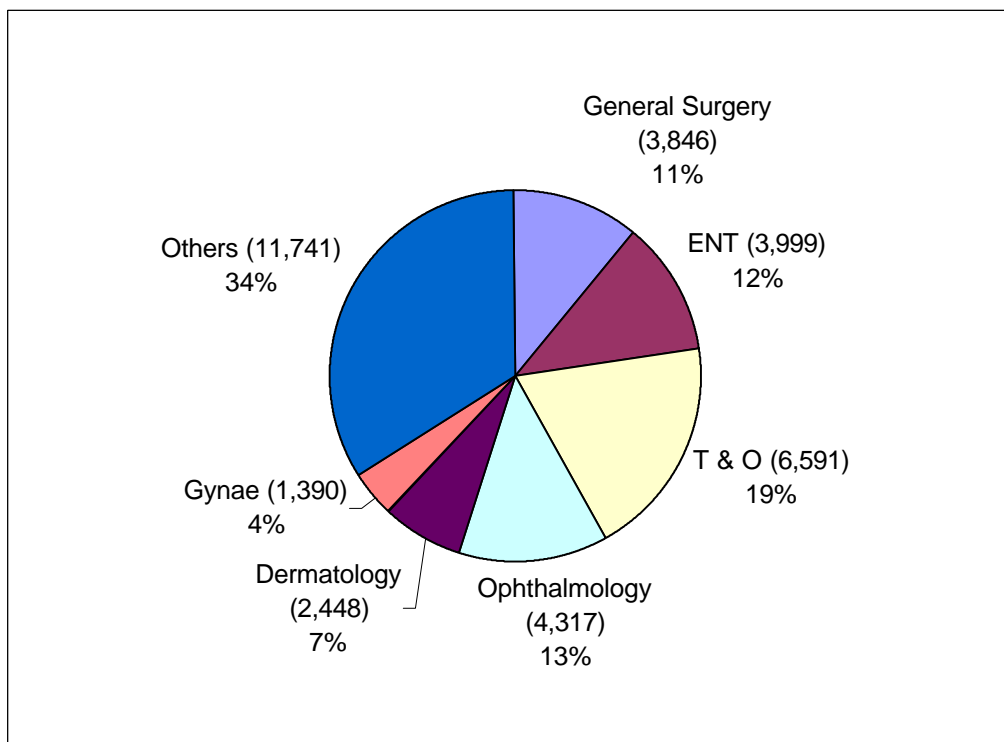
The overwhelming majority of those waiting (66%) were within six specialties: General Surgery; ENT; Trauma & Orthopaedics; Ophthalmology; Dermatology and Gynaecology (Figure 5a). Corresponding figures for excess waiters are shown in Figure 5b. All figures include only those who are waiting for their first appointment without having cancelled or missed a previous appointment during the March 2000 quarter.

**Figure 5a** Outpatients – Total Waiters by Specialty at the end of March 2000



Source: CH3 Part1

**Figure 5b** Outpatients – Excess Waiters<sup>1</sup> by Specialty at the end of March 2000



<sup>1</sup>See Notes to Editors (paragraph 6) for definition of Excess Waiters.

Source: CH3 Part 1

## Notes to Editors

1. Unless otherwise stated hospitals and patients mentioned in this release refer only to HPSS hospitals and patients.
2. The sources for the data contained in this release are the Charter Monitoring Returns CH1, CH2, CH3 and CH4. These returns collect information from Hospital Trusts on a quarterly basis.
3. All figures include all privately funded patients waiting for treatment in Health Service hospitals and those patients who are resident outside Northern Ireland.
4. In Northern Ireland, inpatient excess waiters are defined as those having to wait 12 months or more for admission to the Cardiac Surgery specialty and those having to wait 18 months or more to other specialties.
5. For outpatients, excess waiters are defined as those having to wait more than 3 months for a first outpatient appointment.
6. 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 this intention but who leaves hospital for any reason without staying overnight is still counted as an ordinary admission. Day cases are not included.
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 should be counted as an ordinary admission.
8. The 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;
  - Patients already in hospitals but 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 subsequently offered a date but unable to attend have their waiting times calculated from the most recent date offered. These are known as self-deferred cases and are included in the total waiting.
10. Monthly waiting list figures had previously been included in this publication. The source for the monthly waiting list figures is the monthly return CHA. Due to technical difficulties at source monthly figures are not currently available. Work is ongoing to rectify this problem.

11. The source for outpatient waiting list data is the quarterly Charter Monitoring Return CH3.
12. Figures relating to the quarter ending June 2000 will be released Tuesday, 12th September 2000.
13. Some of the data may be provisional and may be subject to revision in subsequent quarters.
14. One Trust (Sperrin Lakeland) was unable to produce CH4 data for quarter ending March 2000. An estimate of their data has been included in the March 2000 data shown in Table 4.
15. 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](http://www.statistics.gov.uk).

### **Additional Information**

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

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Regional Information Branch  
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