

# Information Release



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

An Roinn  
**Sláinte, Seirbhísí Sóisialta  
agus Sábháilteachta Poiblí**

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## Northern Ireland Waiting Lists – March 2004

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 2004, 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 2004 stood at 49,975.

Over the quarter, comparing the end of March 2004 with the end of December 2003 (52,606), the total number waiting has decreased by 2,631 (-5.0%).

Over the year, comparing the end of March 2004 with the end of March 2003 (55,577), the total number waiting decreased by 5,602 (-10.1%).

**Table 1: Quarterly Waiting Lists – March 2004**

Waiting for:	Quarter Ending March 2004	Change compared with end of previous quarter	Change compared with end same quarter – previous year
Ordinary Admissions	22,408	-1563	-2,692
Day case Admissions	27,567	-1068	-2,910
Total Waiting	49,975	-2,631	-5,602

Source: CHI

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



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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 49,975 people waiting for admission to hospital at the end of March 2004, 22,408 (44.8%) were waiting for ordinary admission and 27,567 (55.2%) were waiting for day case admission (Table 1).

Since the end of December 2003, the number of cases waiting for ordinary admission has decreased by 1,563 (-6.5%) and the number waiting for day case admission has decreased by 1,068 (-3.7%).

In comparison with March 2003, the number of cases waiting for ordinary admission has decreased by 2,692 (-10.7%) and the number waiting for day case admission has decreased by 2,910 (-9.5%).

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

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.

The number of excess waiters at the end of March 2004 stood at 3,616 or 7.2% of the total waiting.

Over the quarter, comparing the end of March 2004 with the end of December 2003, the number of excess waiters decreased by 1,761 (-32.7%).

Over the year, comparing the end of March 2004 with the end of March 2003, the number of excess waiters decreased by 3,043 (-45.7%).

**Table 2** Excess Waiters<sup>1</sup> – March 2004

Waiting for:	Quarter Ending March 2004	Change compared with end of previous quarter	Change compared with end same quarter - previous year
Ordinary admissions	2,744	-1,325	-2,414
Day case admissions	872	-436	-629
Total Waiting	3,616	-1,761	-3,043

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

Source: CHI

## Peak Figures

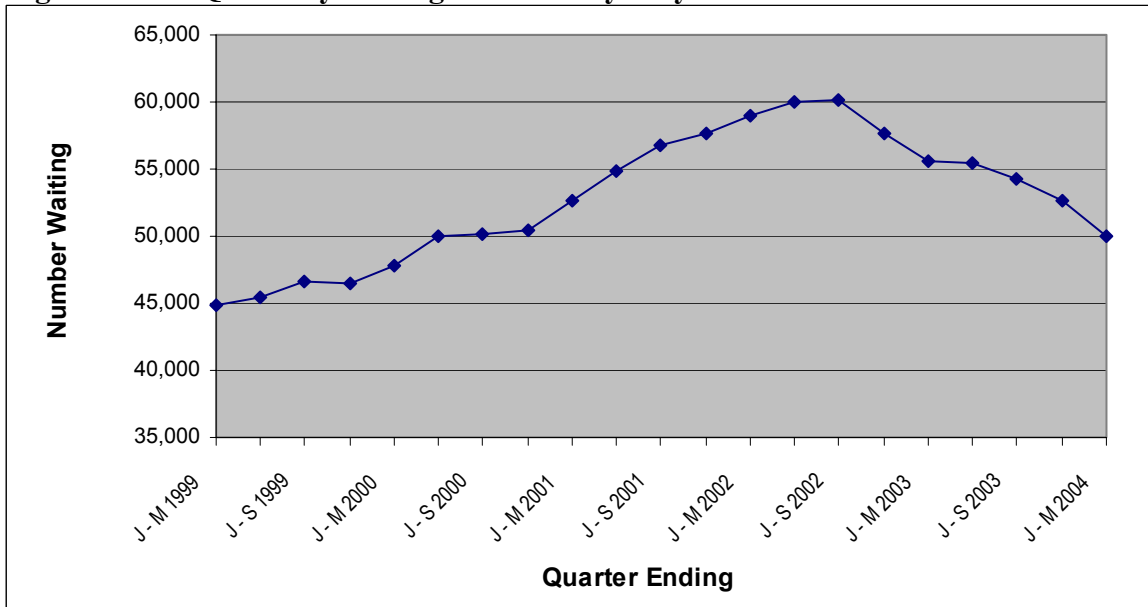
The end of March 2004 total of 49,975 on the inpatient waiting list represents a decrease of 10,215 (-17.0%) on the peak waiting list figure of 60,190 (end September 2002).

The number of excess waiters has fallen to 3,616 at the end of March 2004, and represents a decrease of 5,542 (-60.5%) on the peak figure of 9,158 recorded at the end of September 2002.

## Trends

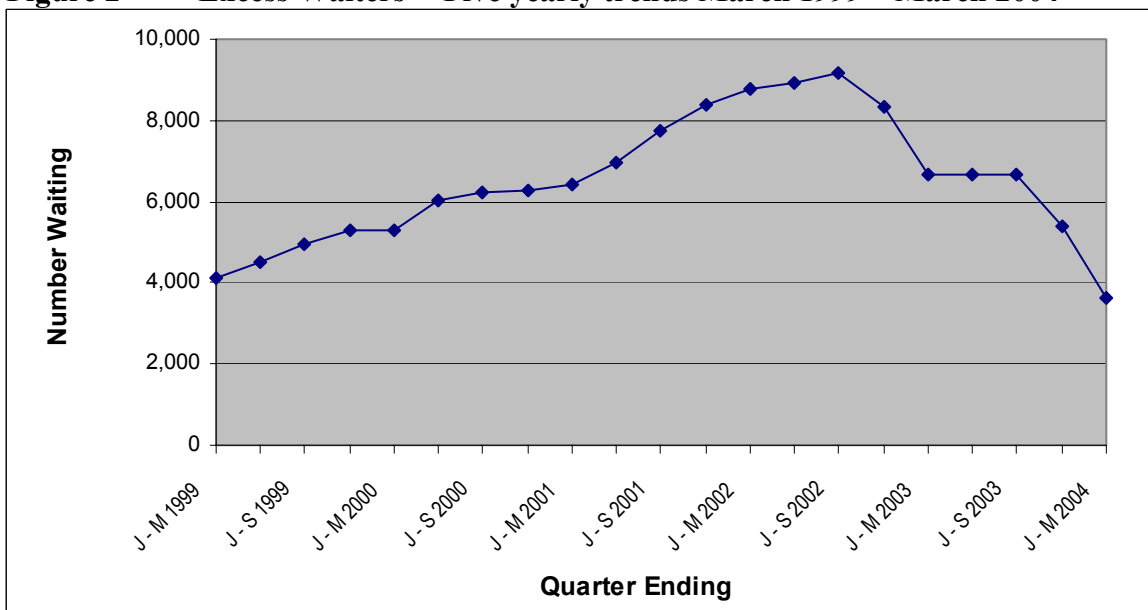
The total number of people waiting was on a generally upward trend from March 1999, and rose to peak in September 2002. The trend reversed and the total number of people waiting decreased during the quarters ending December 2002, March 2003, June 2003, September 2003 and December 2003 and has continued to decrease in the current quarter (Figure 1). Excess waiters have followed a similar trend (Figure 2).

**Figure 1 Quarterly waiting lists – Five yearly trends March 1999 – March 2004**



Source: CH1

**Figure 2 Excess Waiters<sup>1</sup> - Five yearly trends March 1999 – March 2004**



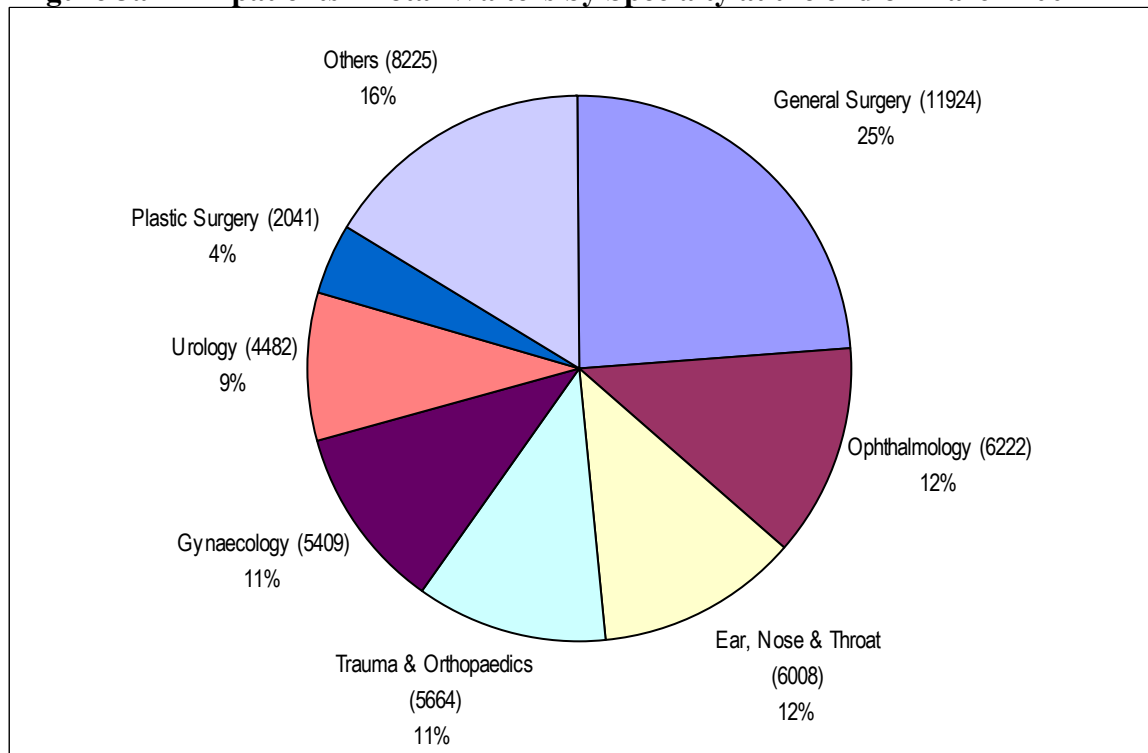
<sup>1</sup>See Notes to Editors (paragraph 5) for definition of Excess waiters.

Source: CH1

### Inpatients Waiting by Specialty

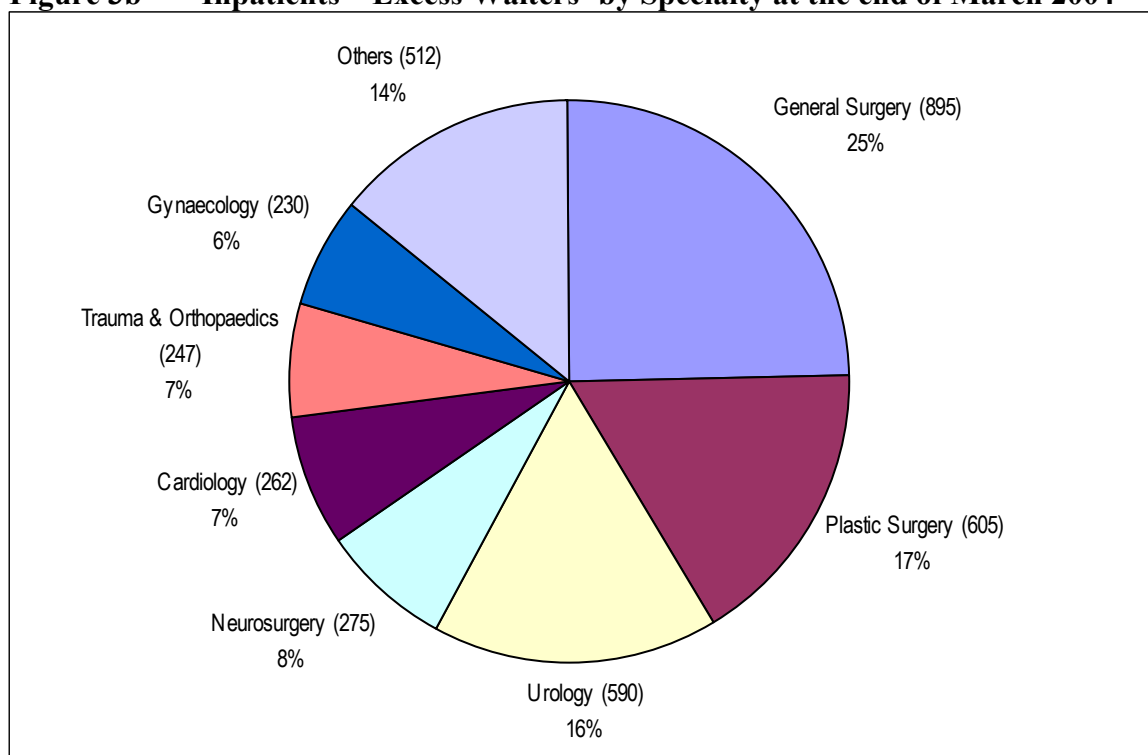
The overwhelming majority of those waiting (84%) were within seven specialties: General Surgery; Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT); Ophthalmology; Gynaecology (Gynae); Trauma and Orthopaedic Surgery (T&O); Urology and Plastic Surgery (Figure 3a). Corresponding figures for excess waiters are shown in Figure 3b.

**Figure 3a Inpatients - Total Waiters by Specialty at the end of March 2004**



Source: CH1

**Figure 3b Inpatients – Excess Waiters<sup>1</sup> by Specialty at the end of March 2004**



<sup>1</sup>See notes to editors (paragraph 5) for definition of Excess Waiters.  
Source: CH1

## Inpatient Waiting Time by Specialty

Waiting times for inpatients by specialty are shown in Tables 3a and 3b. The proportion of those waiting less than 12 months ranged from 100% in Rheumatology to 41.9% in Neurosurgery. Overall over three quarters (85.2%) of those waiting for admission were waiting less than 12 months.

**Table 3a Number of Patients Waiting for Admission by Months Waiting and Specialty**

Specialty	Patients Waiting for Admission by Months Waiting					Total Number of Patients Awaiting Admission
	0 - 2	3 - 11	12 - 17	18 - 23	24 +	
General Surgery	5,953	4,234	842	277	618	11,924
Ophthalmology	2,805	2,880	367	119	51	6,222
Ear, Nose & Throat	2,363	3,006	417	82	140	6,008
Trauma & Orthopaedics	1,663	3,028	726	135	112	5,664
Gynaecology	2,615	2,213	351	112	118	5,409
Urology	1,844	1,672	376	205	385	4,482
Plastic Surgery	500	700	236	104	501	2,041
General Medicine	1,481	263	12	1	2	1,759
Cardiology	666	426	147	124	138	1,501
Gastroenterology	562	213	12	1	9	797
Paediatric Surgery	272	295	65	0	0	632
Neurosurgery	82	165	67	41	234	589
Rheumatology	473	92	0	0	0	565
Oral Surgery	197	212	44	15	17	485
Dermatology	273	114	19	4	2	412
Pain Management	204	189	7	3	5	408
Cardiac Surgery	129	113	12	0	0	254
Thoracic Surgery	50	64	20	21	26	181
Neurology	82	69	29	0	1	181
Paediatric Dentistry	90	65	4	0	0	159
Other	273	25	3	1	0	302
<b>All Specialties</b>	<b>22,577</b>	<b>20,038</b>	<b>3,756</b>	<b>1,245</b>	<b>2,359</b>	<b>49,975</b>

Source: CHI

**Table 3b Percentage of Patients Waiting for Admission by Months Waiting and Specialty**

Specialty	Patients Waiting for Admission by Months Waiting				
	0 - 2	3 - 11	12 - 17	18 - 23	24 +
General Surgery	49.9%	35.5%	7.1%	2.3%	5.2%
Ophthalmology	45.1%	46.3%	5.9%	1.9%	0.8%
Ear, Nose & Throat	39.3%	50.0%	6.9%	1.4%	2.3%
Trauma & Orthopaedic	29.4%	53.5%	12.8%	2.4%	2.0%
Gynaecology	48.3%	40.9%	6.5%	2.1%	2.2%
Urology	41.1%	37.3%	8.4%	4.6%	8.6%
Plastic Surgery	24.5%	34.3%	11.6%	5.1%	24.5%
General Medicine	84.2%	15.0%	0.7%	0.1%	0.1%
Cardiology	44.4%	28.4%	9.8%	8.3%	9.2%
Gastroenterology	70.5%	26.7%	1.5%	0.1%	1.1%
Paediatric Surgery	43.0%	46.7%	10.3%	0.0%	0.0%
Neurosurgery	13.9%	28.0%	11.4%	7.0%	39.7%
Rheumatology	83.7%	16.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Oral Surgery	40.6%	43.7%	9.1%	3.1%	3.5%
Dermatology	66.3%	27.7%	4.6%	1.0%	0.5%
Pain Management	50.0%	46.3%	1.7%	0.7%	1.2%
Cardiac Surgery	50.8%	44.5%	4.7%	0.0%	0.0%
Thoracic Surgery	27.6%	35.4%	11.0%	11.6%	14.4%
Neurology	45.3%	38.1%	16.0%	0.0%	0.6%
Paediatric Dentistry	56.6%	40.9%	2.5%	0.0%	0.0%
Other	90.4%	8.3%	1.0%	0.3%	0.0%
<b>All Specialties</b>	<b>45.2%</b>	<b>40.1%</b>	<b>7.5%</b>	<b>2.5%</b>	<b>4.7%</b>

Source: CHI

## Completed Waits

Waiting times for completed inpatient waits are shown in Table 4. A total of 40,399 inpatients were admitted to hospital (excluding those who had previously refused an offer of attendance) during the March 2004 quarter. Seventy five percent of patients received their treatment within 3 months of being placed on the waiting list and 95% received their treatment within 12 months.

**Table 4 Completed Inpatient Waits**

Quarter	Time Waiting in Months					Total
	0 - 2	3 - 11	12 - 17	18 - 23	24+	
J - M 2001	76.9%	18.7%	2.7%	0.8%	0.8%	36,377
A - J 2001	76.6%	19.4%	2.5%	0.8%	0.7%	35,858
J - S 2001	74.4%	20.8%	3.1%	1.0%	0.8%	33,271
O - D 2001	75.0%	20.0%	3.1%	1.0%	0.9%	37,656
<b>J - D 2001</b>	<b>75.7%</b>	<b>19.7%</b>	<b>2.9%</b>	<b>0.9%</b>	<b>0.8%</b>	<b>143,162</b>
J - M 2002	74.9%	19.7%	3.6%	1.1%	0.8%	38,042
A - J 2002 <sup>2</sup>	74.4%	20.4%	3.3%	1.0%	0.9%	36,885
J - S 2002 <sup>2</sup>	72.9%	21.9%	3.3%	1.1%	0.7%	33,522
O - D 2002 <sup>2</sup>	74.1%	20.3%	3.5%	1.2%	0.9%	38,009
<b>J - D 2002</b>	<b>74.1%</b>	<b>20.5%</b>	<b>3.4%</b>	<b>1.1%</b>	<b>0.8%</b>	<b>146,458</b>
J - M 2003	74.1%	19.5%	3.8%	1.4%	1.2%	38,371
A - J 2003	74.3%	20.6%	3.1%	1.0%	1.0%	37,983
J - S 2003	72.3%	22.7%	2.9%	1.1%	1.0%	35,256
O - D 2003	73.2%	21.2%	3.0%	1.2%	1.3%	38,306
<b>J - D 2003</b>	<b>73.5%</b>	<b>21.0%</b>	<b>3.2%</b>	<b>1.2%</b>	<b>1.1%</b>	<b>149,916</b>
J - M 2004	74.9%	19.9%	3.1%	1.0%	1.2%	40,399

Source: CH2 Part 1

<sup>2</sup>Completed Inpatient Wait figures for quarters ending June 2003, September 2003 and December 2003 have been revised to reflect amendments.

## Monthly Inpatient Waiting Lists

The Department also collects monthly data on the size of the inpatient waiting list excluding private patients and non-NI residents. These figures are shown in Tables 5 and 6.

**Table 5 Monthly Inpatient Waiting Lists**

Month Ending	Admission Method		Total Waiting	Excess Waiters	
	Ordinary	Day Case		Number	% of Total
March 2003 <sup>3</sup>	24,502	29,828	54,330	6,626	12.2%
April 2003 <sup>3</sup>	24,480	29,862	54,342	6,620	12.2%
May 2003 <sup>3</sup>	24,309	30,147	54,456	6,702	12.3%
June 2003	24,250	30,299	54,549	6,646	12.2%
July 2003	24,612	30,148	54,760	6,774	12.4%
August 2003	24,474	29,867	54,341	6,886	12.7%
September 2003	23,853	29,355	53,208	6,629	12.5%
October 2003	24,040	28,924	52,964	6,225	11.8%
November 2003	23,358	28,180	51,538	5,733	11.1%
December 2003	23,562	28,203	51,765	5,379	10.4%
January 2004	23,036	28,176	51,212	4,737	9.2%
February 2004	21,845	28,044	49,889	4,290	8.6%
March 2004	21,998	27,022	49,020	3,666	7.5%

Source: CHA

<sup>3</sup> Estimated Figures – See Note 14

The monthly waiting list figures have shown an overall decrease in the 3-month period since December 2003.

Patients resident in a Health Board Area may receive treatment in any of the four Health Boards. Table 6 shows the number of residents in each Health Board Area waiting for admission to hospitals in their own and other Health Board Areas.

**Table 6 Monthly Inpatient Waiting Lists by Board of Residence and Board of Treatment**

Board of Residence	Board of Treatment			
	EHSSB	NHSSB	SHSSB	WHSSB
Eastern	19,052	83	115	0
Northern	5,763	5,685	419	703
Southern	3,740	21	7,058	124
Western	979	32	50	5,196
<b>Northern Ireland</b>	<b>29,534</b>	<b>5,821</b>	<b>7,642</b>	<b>6,023</b>

Source: CHA

# Outpatients

## Headline Totals

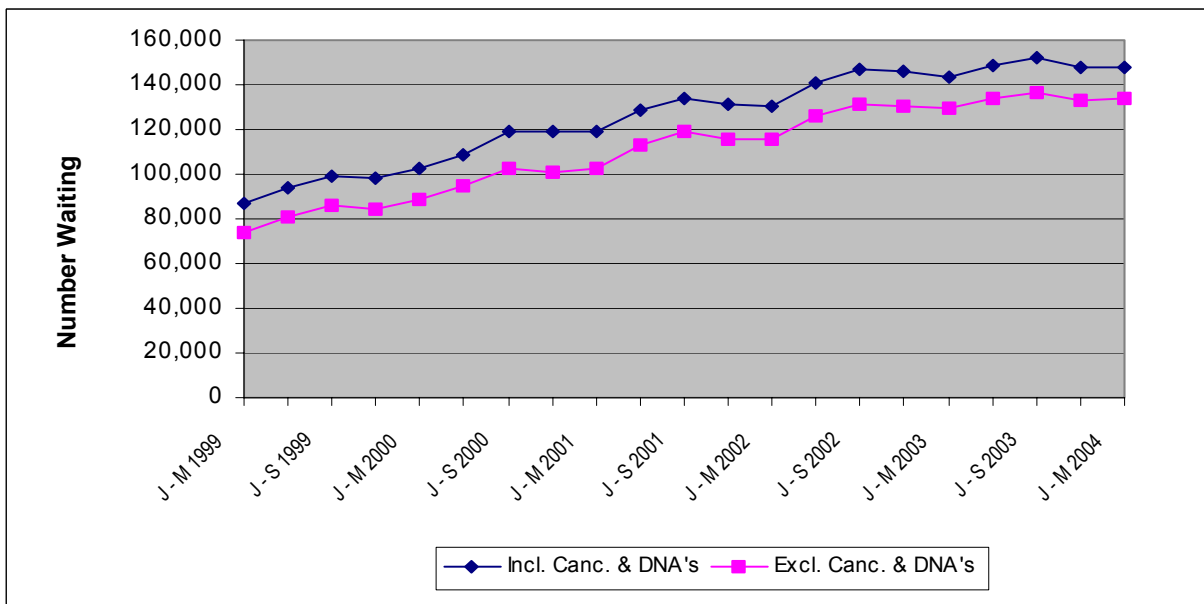
The number of patients waiting for admission as outpatients (including cancellations and deferrals) at the end of March 2004 stood at 147,961 representing an increase of 434<sup>4</sup> (0.29%) over the quarter and an increase of 4,574<sup>5</sup>(3.0%) compared with the same quarter in the previous year.

Corresponding quarterly and annual changes (excluding cancellations and deferrals) were +0.5% and +3.7% respectively. Figure 4 shows five yearly trends in the number of outpatients waiting for a first appointment, Figure 5 shows the same trends information for excess waiters (excess waiters are defined as patients waiting more than 3 months for a first outpatient appointment).

<sup>4</sup>Outpatient figures for December 2003 have been revised.

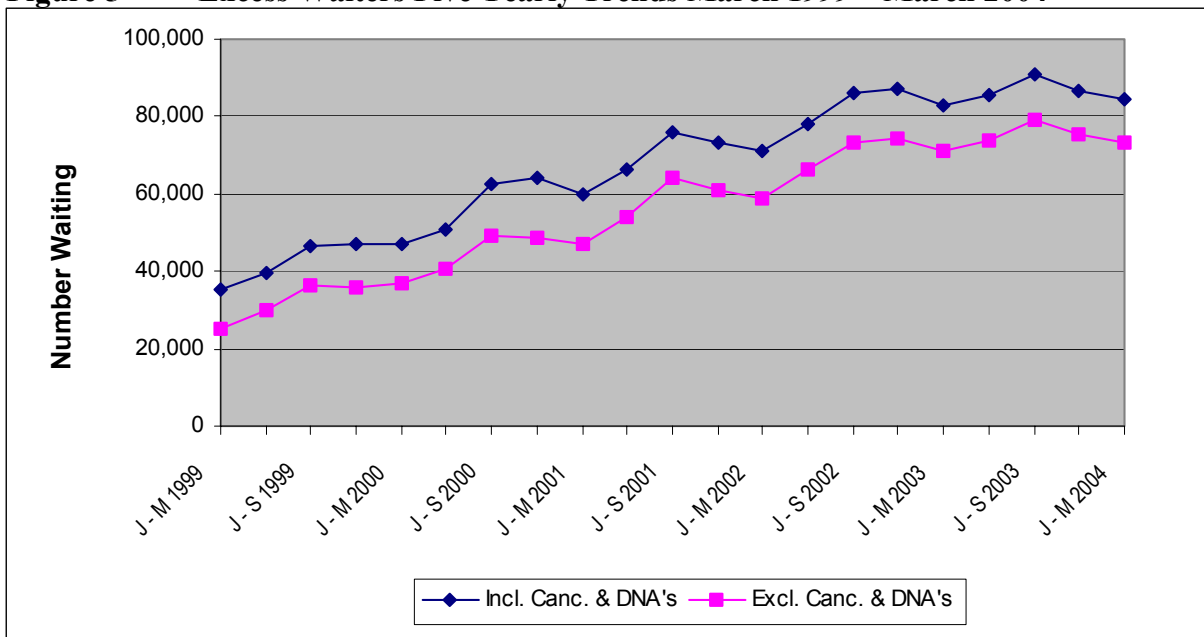
<sup>5</sup>Outpatient figures for the June 2002, September 2002, December 2002 and March 2003 quarters have been revised to include estimates – see note 15.

**Figure 4 Outpatients Waiting for a First Appointment (including and excluding cancellations and deferrals) – Five Yearly Trends March 1999 – March 2004<sup>4,5</sup>**



Source: CH3 Parts 1&2.

**Figure 5 Excess Waiters Five Yearly Trends March 1999 – March 2004<sup>4,5</sup>**

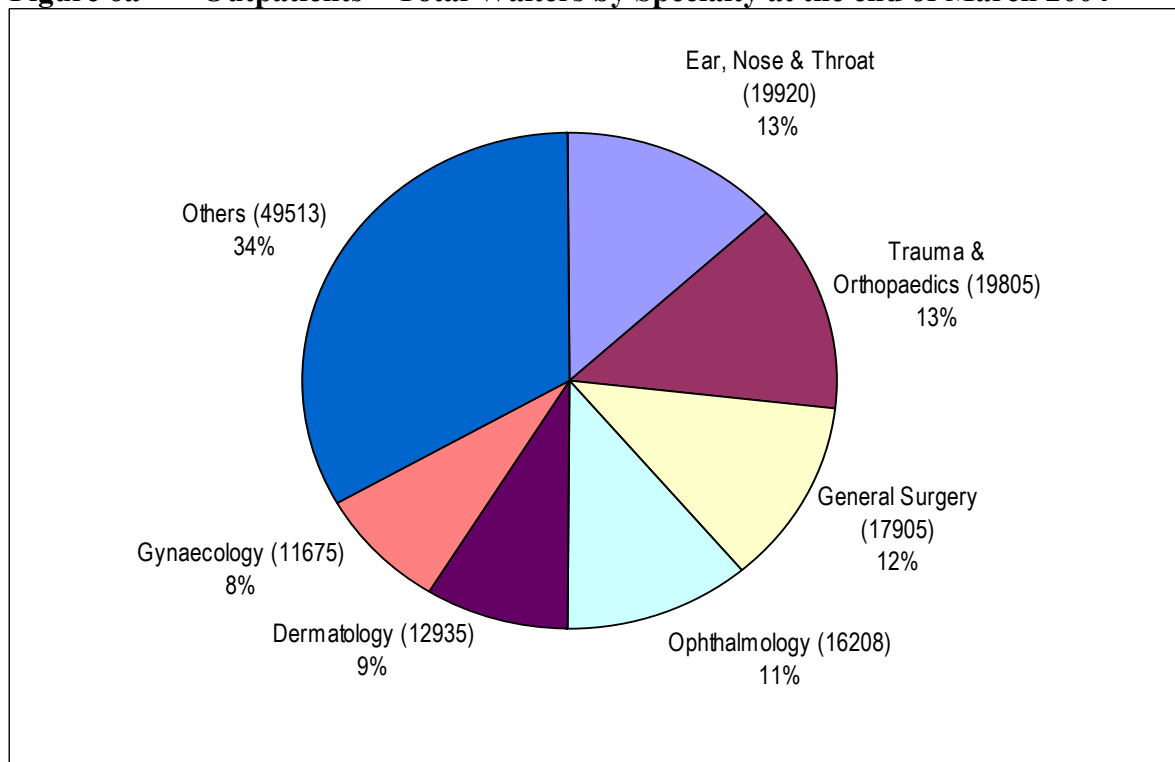


Source: CH3 Parts 1 & 2

## Outpatients Waiting by Specialty

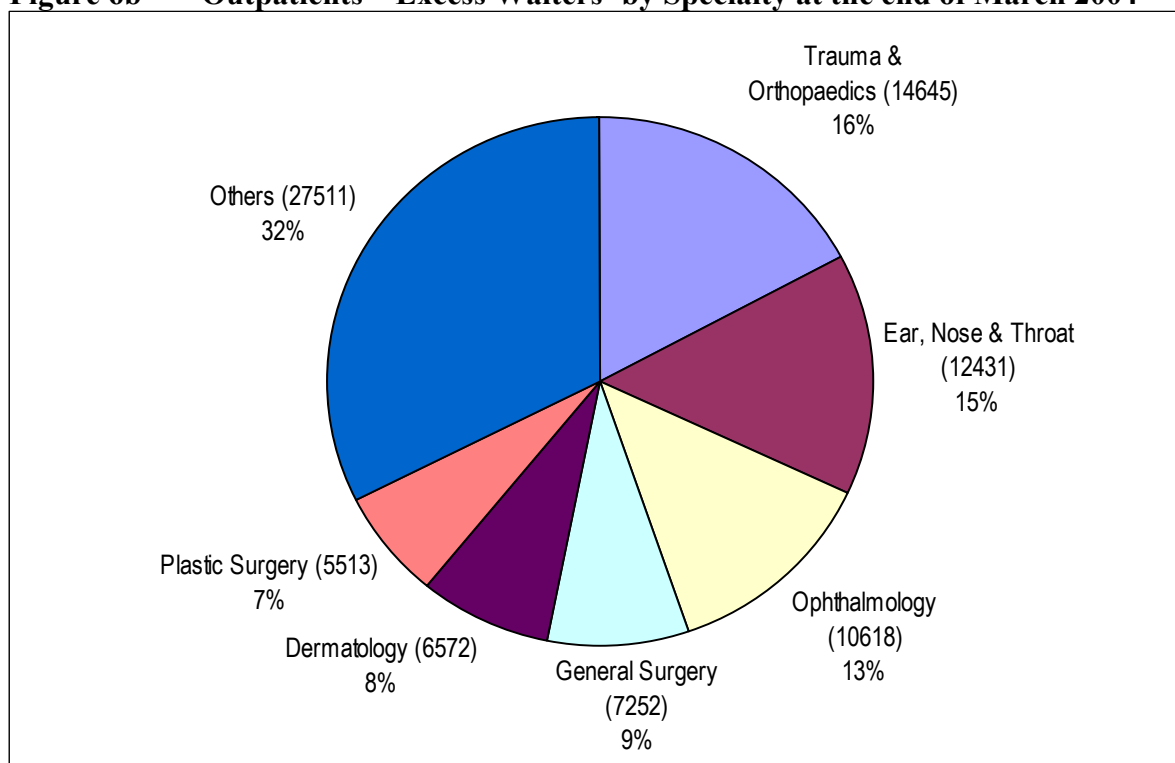
The majority of those waiting (66%) were within six specialties: Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT); Trauma and Orthopaedic Surgery (T&O); General Surgery; Ophthalmology; Dermatology and Gynaecology (Gynae) (Figure 5a). Corresponding figures for excess waiters are shown in Figure 5b. All figures include those who are waiting for their first appointment including those who have cancelled or missed a previous appointment during the March 2004 quarter.

**Figure 6a Outpatients – Total Waiters by Specialty at the end of March 2004**



Source: CH3.

**Figure 6b Outpatients – Excess Waiters<sup>1</sup> by Specialty at the end of March 2004**



<sup>1</sup>See notes to editors (paragraph 6) for definition of Excess Waiters.  
Source: CH3.

## Outpatient Waiting Time by Specialty

Waiting times for outpatients by specialty are shown in Tables 7a and 7b. The proportion of those waiting less than 12 months ranged from 100% in Old Age Psychiatry, Clinical Haematology and Clinical Oncology to 23.8% in Plastic Surgery. Overall four fifths (80%) of those waiting for treatment were waiting less than 12 months.

**Table 7a Number of Patients Waiting for a First Appointment by Months Waiting and Specialty**

Specialty	Patients Waiting for an Appointment by Months Waiting					Total Number of Patients Awaiting Appointment
	0 - 2	3 - 11	12 - 17	18 - 23	24 +	
Ear, Nose & Throat	7,489	8,707	2,201	854	669	19,920
Trauma & Orthopaedics	5,160	7,040	2,466	1,626	3,513	19,805
General Surgery	10,653	5,799	1,067	275	111	17,905
Ophthalmology	5,590	8,099	1,504	577	438	16,208
Dermatology	6,363	4,672	829	562	509	12,935
Gynaecology	6,718	4,402	413	110	32	11,675
General Medicine	3,807	2,517	528	163	125	7,140
Plastic Surgery	639	823	458	477	3,755	6,152
Cardiology	2,481	1,486	199	84	155	4,405
Urology	1,591	1,769	481	156	288	4,285
Rheumatology	1,226	1,695	488	194	43	3,646
Neurology	1,360	1,756	233	68	34	3,451
Paediatrics	1,893	829	96	122	348	3,288
Mental Illness	1,981	665	8	0	0	2,654
Oral Surgery	696	967	293	232	347	2,535
Pain Management	659	899	279	178	220	2,235
Paediatric Surgery	568	499	58	43	108	1,276
Geriatric Medicine	704	484	76	2	0	1,266
Resorative Dentistry	147	314	82	104	262	909
Gastroenterology	521	326	22	1	1	871
Nephrology	436	246	28	15	40	765
Child & Adolescent Psychiatry	345	283	24	3	0	655
Orthodontics	388	206	20	14	8	636
Thoracic Medicine	413	181	21	6	9	630
Endocrinology	421	160	6	2	0	589
Neurosurgery	169	180	25	4	6	384
Audiological Medicine	134	19	12	14	54	233
Old Age Psychiatry	135	77	0	0	0	212
Paediatric Dentistry	42	34	14	25	83	198
Haematology (Clinical)	158	33	0	0	0	191
Cardiac Surgery	96	46	1	0	0	143
Chemical Pathology	50	59	10	1	0	120
Anaesthetics	66	36	6	3	4	115
Clinical Oncology	80	9	0	0	0	89
Paediatric Neurology	42	7	7	8	22	86
Other	198	142	8	2	4	354
<b>All Specialties</b>	<b>63,419</b>	<b>55,466</b>	<b>11,963</b>	<b>5,925</b>	<b>11,188</b>	<b>147,961</b>

Source: CH3

**Table 7b Percentage of Patients Waiting for a First Appointment by Months Waiting and Specialty**

Specialty	Patients Waiting for an Appointment by Months				
	0 - 2	3 - 11	12 - 17	18 - 23	24+
Ear, Nose & Throat	37.6%	43.7%	11.0%	4.3%	3.4%
Trauma & Orthopaedics	26.1%	35.5%	12.5%	8.2%	17.7%
General Surgery	59.5%	32.4%	6.0%	1.5%	0.6%
Ophthalmology	34.5%	50.0%	9.3%	3.6%	2.7%
Dermatology	49.2%	36.1%	6.4%	4.3%	3.9%
Gynaecology	57.5%	37.7%	3.5%	0.9%	0.3%
General Medicine	53.3%	35.3%	7.4%	2.3%	1.8%
Plastic Surgery	10.4%	13.4%	7.4%	7.8%	61.0%
Cardiology	56.3%	33.7%	4.5%	1.9%	3.5%
Urology	37.1%	41.3%	11.2%	3.6%	6.7%
Rheumatology	33.6%	46.5%	13.4%	5.3%	1.2%
Neurology	39.4%	50.9%	6.8%	2.0%	1.0%
Paediatrics	57.6%	25.2%	2.9%	3.7%	10.6%
Mental Illness	74.6%	25.1%	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%
Oral Surgery	27.5%	38.1%	11.6%	9.2%	13.7%
Pain Management	29.5%	40.2%	12.5%	8.0%	9.8%
Paediatric Surgery	44.5%	39.1%	4.5%	3.4%	8.5%
Geriatric Medicine	55.6%	38.2%	6.0%	0.2%	0.0%
Resorative Dentistry	16.2%	34.5%	9.0%	11.4%	28.8%
Gastroenterology	59.8%	37.4%	2.5%	0.1%	0.1%
Nephrology	57.0%	32.2%	3.7%	2.0%	5.2%
Child & Adolescent Psychiatry	52.7%	43.2%	3.7%	0.5%	0.0%
Orthodontics	61.0%	32.4%	3.1%	2.2%	1.3%
Thoracic Medicine	65.6%	28.7%	3.3%	1.0%	1.4%
Endocrinology	71.5%	27.2%	1.0%	0.3%	0.0%
Neurosurgery	44.0%	46.9%	6.5%	1.0%	1.6%
Audiological Medicine	57.5%	8.2%	5.2%	6.0%	23.2%
Old Age Psychiatry	63.7%	36.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Paediatric Dentistry	21.2%	17.2%	7.1%	12.6%	41.9%
Haematology (Clinical)	82.7%	17.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Cardiac Surgery	67.1%	32.2%	0.7%	0.0%	0.0%
Chemical Pathology	41.7%	49.2%	8.3%	0.8%	0.0%
Anaesthetics	57.4%	31.3%	5.2%	2.6%	3.5%
Clinical Oncology	89.9%	10.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Paediatric Neurology	48.8%	8.1%	8.1%	9.3%	25.6%
Other	55.9%	40.1%	2.3%	0.6%	1.1%
<b>All Specialties</b>	<b>42.9%</b>	<b>37.5%</b>	<b>8.1%</b>	<b>4.0%</b>	<b>7.6%</b>

Source: CH3

## Outpatient Completed Waits

Waiting times for completed outpatient waits are shown in Table 8. During the March 2004 quarter a total of 91,496 outpatients attended their first appointment without having cancelled or missed a previous appointment. Seventy percent of patients attended their first outpatient appointment within 3 months of being placed on the waiting list and 95% had their first outpatient appointment within 12 months.

**Table 8 Completed Outpatient Waits for First Appointment**

Quarter	Time Waiting in Months					Total
	0 - 2	3 - 11	12 - 17	18 - 23	24+	
J - M 2001	75.6%	22.5%	1.3%	0.4%	0.2%	86,024
A - J 2001	77.2%	21.0%	1.2%	0.4%	0.2%	82,161
J - S 2001	74.4%	23.7%	1.2%	0.5%	0.3%	77,880
O - D 2001 <sup>6</sup>	72.4%	24.7%	1.8%	0.7%	0.3%	88,331
<b>J - D 2001<sup>6</sup></b>	<b>74.9%</b>	<b>23.0%</b>	<b>1.4%</b>	<b>0.5%</b>	<b>0.3%</b>	<b>334,396</b>
J - M 2002 <sup>6</sup>	72.4%	25.3%	1.4%	0.6%	0.3%	85,856
A - J 2002 <sup>6</sup>	74.9%	22.7%	1.4%	0.5%	0.4%	82,282
J - S 2002 <sup>6</sup>	71.0%	26.3%	1.8%	0.4%	0.4%	79,986
O - D 2002 <sup>6</sup>	70.2%	26.6%	2.0%	0.6%	0.6%	88,056
<b>J - D 2002<sup>6</sup></b>	<b>72.1%</b>	<b>25.2%</b>	<b>1.7%</b>	<b>0.5%</b>	<b>0.4%</b>	<b>336,180</b>
J - M 2003 <sup>6</sup>	70.0%	25.6%	2.4%	0.9%	1.2%	85,054
A - J 2003 <sup>6</sup>	72.1%	24.4%	2.2%	0.7%	0.7%	84,963
J - S 2003 <sup>6</sup>	69.5%	26.6%	2.2%	0.8%	0.9%	80,128
O - D 2003 <sup>6</sup>	69.6%	26.1%	2.5%	0.9%	0.9%	88,711
<b>J - D 2003<sup>6</sup></b>	<b>70.3%</b>	<b>25.7%</b>	<b>2.3%</b>	<b>0.8%</b>	<b>0.9%</b>	<b>338,856</b>
J - M 2004 <sup>6</sup>	69.8%	25.2%	3.0%	1.0%	1.1%	91,496

Source: CH4 Part 1

<sup>6</sup> Estimated Figures – See note 16.

## 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. The CHA return collects information from Health Boards on a monthly basis.
3. There is a fundamental difference in coverage between Board based and Trust based information. Board based (CHA) returns exclude all patients living outside Northern Ireland and all privately funded patients waiting for treatment in Health Service hospitals.
4. Apart from Tables 5 and 6, figures include all privately funded patients waiting for treatment in Health Service hospitals and those patients who are resident outside Northern Ireland.
5. 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.
6. For outpatients, excess waiters are defined as those having to wait more than 3 months for a first outpatient appointment.
7. 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.
8. 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.
9. 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 (specialties 510 and 520);
  - Patients already in hospitals but included on other waiting lists;
  - Patients who are temporarily suspended from waiting lists.
10. Outpatient waiting list figures presented do not include maternity specialties 510 and 520.
11. 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.

12. The source for the monthly waiting list figures is the monthly CHA return. The monthly figures presented here are produced from an ad-hoc reporting system which does not go through the more stringent validation processes which produce the quarterly figures. For this reason and the fact that the two sets of figures are run-off at different points in time mean that there may be anomalies when comparing the monthly figures with the quarterly figures.
13. Health Board residents included in Table 6 are not always assigned a Health Board of treatment as some patients may be waiting for admission to a hospital outside Northern Ireland.
14. Western Board have now provided figures for Western Board residents awaiting admission to hospital as a day case in the General Medicine specialty. Estimated data was supplied for months ending April 2002 to May 2003 and figures for these months have been revised to include the estimated data. Revised figures are included in Tables 5 and 6.
15. Green Park HSS Trust now provide outpatient waiting list figures in the Pain Management specialty. Estimated totals were provided for quarters ending June, September and December 2002 and March 2003 and estimates for each time band have been calculated. These new estimates have been included in the outpatient figures shown in Figures 4 and 5.
16. Due to reasons beyond the control of the Trust, United Hospitals HSS Trust has been unable to produce CH4 data for all quarters between December 2001 and March 2004. This Trust has provided estimated totals for these quarters and estimates for each time band have been calculated. These new estimates for the missing data for the United Group of Hospitals have been included in the data shown in Table 8. When CH4 data becomes available these estimates will be recast.
17. Some of the data is provisional and may be subject to revision in subsequent quarters.
18. Figures relating to the quarter ending June 2004 will be released on Thursday, 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2004.
19. For general enquiries about National Statistics, contact the National Statistics Public Service on

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LONDON SW1V 2QQ

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:

Office Information Manager  
Regional Information Branch  
Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety  
Annexe 2  
Castle Buildings  
Stormont  
BT4 3UD

Internet address: <http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/stats&research/pubs.asp>