



Consultation on the publication of Cancer Waiting Time Statistics

**Information Services Division (ISD)
NHS National Services Scotland**

Responses required by 15 May 2015

**An electronic version of the document is available
during the consultation period at:**

<http://www.isdscotland.org/Health-Topics/Waiting-Times/News/>

Background

Waiting times are important to patients and are a measure of how the NHS is responding to demand for services. Measuring and regular reporting of waiting times highlight where there are delays in the system and enables monitoring of the effectiveness of NHSScotland's performance. Information Services Division (ISD) Scotland continues to be committed to improving the information on waiting times along with our key stakeholders, the NHS Boards and the Scottish Government.

The cancer waiting times publication focuses on the two current cancer waiting times standards:

- 62-day standard from receipt of referral to start of treatment for newly diagnosed primary cancers. This applies to:
 - Patients urgently referred with a suspicion of cancer by a primary care clinician
 - Screened positive patients referred through a national cancer screening programme
 - Direct referral to hospital (for example, self-referral to A&E)
- 31-day standard from decision to treat to start of treatment for newly diagnosed primary cancers (whatever their route of referral).

These standards were introduced from 1 April 2012 following the targets included in the ['Better Cancer - An Action Plan'](#) being achieved in December 2011.

Introduction

A consultation on the publication of New Cancer Waiting Times Statistics was carried out in 2010 prior to the information on the above targets being published for the first time in June 2010.

This information has been published quarterly since 2010 and the format and content of the publication has remained relatively the same over time. Therefore, ISD would like to get feedback from users on format, content and timeliness of the publication to ensure it is still meeting user's needs.

How to respond

ISD have asked specific questions that relate to the content, presentation and frequency of the cancer waiting times publication.

ISD will keep a record of the responses to this consultation, therefore could you please respond with your comments in writing if possible, either by email to NSS.ISDCancerWaitsNew@nhs.net or by post to Amy McKeon, Principal Information Analyst, NI&I – Service Access (Area 122C), NSS – ISD, Gyle Square, Edinburgh, EH12 9EB.

If you would like to respond but cannot do so in writing, please contact Amy McKeon, Principal Information Analyst, 0131 275 6559.

Responses must be submitted no later than Friday 15 May 2015.

Please pass this consultation onto others who you think may be interested.

What happens next

ISD will consider all the feedback received in response to this consultation before making a final decision on any changes to future publications. A summary of the responses and any planned changes will be added to the ISD website at <http://www.isdscotland.org/Health-Topics/Waiting-Times/News/>

Consultation

Presentation of publication

The cancer waiting times publication follows a similar format to most of ISD's publications. The publication is made up of:

- A publication report
- A publication summary
- Excel files

Links to the latest versions can be found here:

Publication report:

<https://isdscotland.scot.nhs.uk/Health-Topics/Waiting-Times/Publications/2014-12-16/2014-12-16-CWT-Report.pdf?43864077330>

Publication summary:

<https://isdscotland.scot.nhs.uk/Health-Topics/Waiting-Times/Publications/2014-12-16/2014-12-16-CWT-Summary.pdf?43864077330>

Excel files (latest published files are from 16 December 2014):

<http://www.isdscotland.org/Health-Topics/Waiting-Times/Publications/data-tables.asp?id=1345#1345>

ISD are currently piloting presenting publications in different formats. The first IVF waiting times publication was released in November and the information was presented on web pages instead of having the publication report. A consultation on this new presentation is currently being carried out. A link to this new format of publication can be found [here](#) .

Questions on presentation of cancer waiting times publication

Presentation

- Do you have any comments on the publication report? Are the tables, charts, text easy to interpret?
- Do you have any comments on the excel files? Are the tables and charts easy to interpret, navigate through?
- Are there any other ways you would like to see the information presented, eg. maps, infographics, using web pages?

Content of publication

Information in the publication is presented separately for the two standards. Information for the 62-day standard is presented by NHS Board area of receipt of referral and information for the 31-day standard is presented by NHS Board of area of first treatment. Since the Board of receipt of referral is responsible for meeting 95% compliance with the 62-day standard and the Board of first treatment is responsible for meeting 95% compliance with the 31-day standard.

The list of tables and figures below shows what information is produced for the two standards. All tables and figures include information for the latest five quarters.

62-day standard:

Fig.1 - Distribution of waits against the 62-day standard from receipt of an urgent referral with a suspicion of cancer to first cancer treatment

1a - Performance against the 62-day standard from receipt of an urgent referral with a suspicion of cancer to first cancer treatment by NHS Board and regional Cancer Network

1b - Performance against the 62-day standard from receipt of an urgent referral with a suspicion of cancer to first cancer treatment by Cancer Type

1c - Trend performance against the 62-day standard from receipt of an urgent referral with suspicion of cancer to first cancer treatment by NHS Board and regional Cancer Network

1d - Trend performance against the 62-day standard from receipt of an urgent referral with suspicion of cancer to first cancer treatment by indicator type

3 - Distribution of waits against the 62-day standard from receipt of an urgent referral with a suspicion of cancer to first cancer treatment by Cancer Type

5 - Exclusions and waiting times adjustments against the 62-day standard from receipt of an urgent referral with a suspicion of cancer to first cancer treatment by NHS Board and regional Cancer Network

31-day standard:

Fig.2 - Distribution of waits against the 31-day standard from date decision to treat to first cancer treatment

2a - Performance against the 31-day standard from date decision to treat to first cancer treatment by NHS Board and regional Cancer Network

2b - Performance against the 31-day standard from date decision to treat to first cancer treatment by Cancer Type

2c - Trend performance against the 31-day standard from date decision to treat to first cancer treatment by NHS Board and regional Cancer Network

2d - Trend performance against the 31-day standard from date decision to treat to first cancer treatment by indicator type

4 - Distribution of waits against the 31-day standard from date decision to treat to first cancer treatment by Cancer Type

6 - Exclusions and waiting times adjustments against the 31-day standard from date decision to treat to first cancer treatment by NHS Board and Regional Cancer Network

Tables 2a and 2b include information on estimated case ascertainment, referrals from cancer waiting times as a ratio of cancer registrations. The registrations data is for an earlier time period, due to the time lag in the registrations data.

Questions on content of cancer waiting times publication

Content

- Tables a-d for both standards contain the same information but in different formats. Are the different formats required each quarter or would annually be sufficient?
- Is the estimated case ascertainment information useful?
- Do you find Fig 1 and Fig 2 (distribution of wait) useful, and is the information easy to interpret?
- Do you find Tables 3 and 4 (distribution of wait) useful, and is the information easy to interpret?
- Do you find Tables 5 and 6 (exclusions and adjustments) useful, and is the information easy to interpret?
- Information for the last five quarters are included, would more trend information be useful?
- Is there any new information that would be useful to include in the publication (eg. information on type of first treatment, figures by age groups)

Frequency and timeliness of publication

The cancer waiting times publication is released quarterly. The information in the publication is based on quarter information. Information for the latest five quarters is included.

Quarterly information is published around three months after the end of the latest quarter being reported. Boards currently submit data to ISD on a monthly basis but they then have the chance to resubmit data for the previous quarter for the publication in case the data has become more up to date.

For example, in the timetable for 2014-15, Boards had to submit monthly data for December 2014 on 20th January 2015. This information is used for Management Information only. Prior to publication Boards can then resubmit data for the last quarter (Oct-Dec 14) on 12th February 2015. This information will then be published at the end of March. This it to allow both ISD and NHS Boards time to quality assure the information and for ISD to produce the publication.

The timetable for monthly and quarterly submissions for 2014/15 is available here: http://www.isdscotland.org/Health-Topics/Waiting-Times/Cancer/Guidance/_docs/CWT-Reporting-Publication-Timetable-2014-15.pdf

Questions on frequency and timeliness of cancer waiting times publication

Frequency and timeliness

- How frequent do you think this information should be published (eg. monthly, quarterly, annually)?
- If more frequent than the current quarterly publication, would a smaller subset of tables be sufficient more frequent (eg. tables 1a, 2a) then have a larger annual publication?
- Is the information in the publication timely enough?