

# Publication Report



## National Drug and Alcohol Treatment Waiting Times Report

January – March 2012

26 June 2012

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## Introduction

This publication presents data from the Drug and Alcohol Treatment Waiting Times Database. It includes details on the number of people waiting, the time waited to start drug or alcohol treatment, and information on specific interventions being accessed.

Waiting times are important to patients and are a high profile measure of how Scotland is responding to demands for services. Waiting times statistics make it possible for a wide range of users to have a clear picture of one aspect of the performance of the NHS across Scotland.

The Scottish Government has set a target that by March 2013, 90% of people who need help with their drug or alcohol problem will wait no longer than three weeks for treatment that supports their recovery. This target is known as the national HEAT (Health improvement, Efficiency, Access, Treatment) target A11.

Information about waiting times for drug and alcohol treatment is collected using the Drug and Alcohol Treatment Waiting Times (DATWT) database which went live across Scotland on 1 April 2011. The DATWT database collects information about the length of time people wait for specialist drug and/or alcohol treatment after they have been referred to treatment services in Scotland.

Prior to the introduction of the database, information was only collected on drug treatment waiting times, measured in two stages: the wait from receiving a referral to the date of assessment offered, and the wait from a care plan being agreed to the date that a treatment is offered. Because of the differences in the current and old data collection, it is not possible to directly compare drug waiting times from the DATWT database with those recorded under the former Drug Treatment Waiting Times Information Framework.

The DATWT database offers several advantages over the earlier system, including:

- recording of both drug and alcohol waiting times
- providing information on the full wait from referral to treatment, in line with the HEAT target
- reporting for each of the 30 Alcohol and Drug Partnerships, as well as by NHS Board and nationally
- collecting information on times that a person is unavailable for treatment, when they could not or did not attend the appointments offered to them, and when first treatment actually took place
- allowing services to directly submit data to ISD securely over the web, with built-in data validation to help ensure quality

This is the fourth reporting period for the system which presents waiting times data for the full treatment journey for both drugs and alcohol. Trend data for drugs waiting times prior to April 2011 is not published as the current data is not comparable with data from the old system.

## Key points

- In January-March 2012, of the 11,753 people who started their first drug and/or alcohol treatment, 87.7% had waited 3 weeks or less, compared to 84.9% in the previous quarter.
- 88.3% of the 7,480 people who started alcohol treatment between January and March 2012 had waited 3 weeks or less, compared to 86.3% in the previous quarter.
- 86.6% of the 4,273 people who attended an appointment for drug treatment waited 3 weeks or less, compared to 82.4% in the previous quarter.
- 90% of people starting their treatment did so within 23 days for alcohol, and 25 days for drug treatment.
- Of the 3,726 people who were still waiting to start drug or alcohol treatment, 4.2%, had waited more than 6 weeks at the end of March 2012; this is an improvement on the previous quarter's 12.7%.

## Results and Commentary

### Interpreting the data

While the data are considered to be of good quality, caution is still recommended when interpreting trends in these statistics for a few reasons:

The number of services submitting data varies significantly from area to area and within areas across the data collection period.

There is a wide range of demand for drug and alcohol treatment services across Scotland, and to meet this demand appropriately, services are tailored to local needs. In some Alcohol and Drug Partnership (ADP) areas, the impact of a single specialised service – for example, a crisis management centre – may dramatically alter the distribution of waiting times in that centre. Consequently, comparisons of some data across quarters, NHS Boards and ADPs may be misleading.

Some of the ADPs and NHS Boards, particularly Island Boards, are treating a small number of people; caution is therefore recommended when interpreting differences in percentages in these organisations over time, as a small change in numbers of individuals can result in a large but meaningless change in percentages.

When DATWT data are extracted for reporting it is a snapshot of what is on the system at that time. Data for previous quarters are updated and so may not be the same as found in previous publications for the same time period. Data for the most recent quarter is provisional and as such is subject to revisions in future publications. See table 9 for information on compliance across Scotland.

When examining trends, it is important to note that figures for the first two quarters of data from the DATWT database (April-June 2011 and July-September 2011) do not include data

from NHS Lothian Substance Misuse Directorate. This will affect comparisons of data across quarters at both a national and local level.

The latest quarter shows a reduction in the number of people that remain on the list as ongoing waits (Table 6). ADPs advised that the ongoing waits section contained individuals whose records had not been updated for a length of time and were incorrectly showing as long ongoing waits. Therefore, ISD have been working with ADPs and services in order to ensure their records are as up to date as possible and this could be partly responsible for the improved performance with ongoing waits.

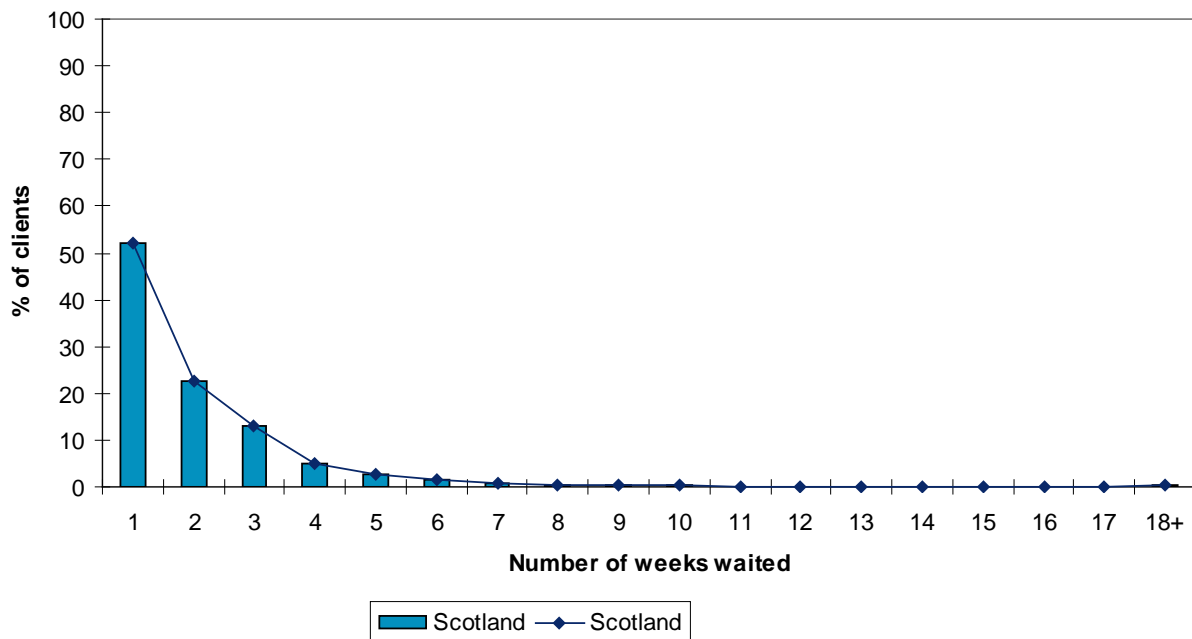
Note that all tables can be accessed via the [spreadsheet at this link](#).

## Drug and Alcohol Treatment Waiting times

***This section is relevant to the progress toward achieving the HEAT A11 target***

- In January - March 2012, of the 11,753 people who started their first drug and/or alcohol treatment, over half (52.1%) had waited one week or less and 87.7% had waited 3 weeks or less (Tables 1, 3).

**Distribution of completed waits for Scotland Alcohol and Drugs, clients seen in quarter ending 31st March 2012**



- 90% of people who started drug or alcohol treatment in January-March 2012 waited 24 days or less (Table 1).
- Of those people who were still waiting to start drug or alcohol treatment (3,726), 4.2% had waited more than 6 weeks at the end of March 2012.

## Alcohol Treatment Waiting Times

### *First treatments*

In January - March 2012, of the 7,480 people who began alcohol treatment, 88.3% waited 3 weeks or less (Table 3).

- 90% of people who started treatment in January-March 2012 waited 23 days or less (Table 1).
- In all NHS Boards except NHS Grampian, NHS Lothian and NHS Tayside, at least 80% of people who started alcohol treatment did so after waiting 3 weeks or less (Table 3) from the date of referral.

Of those people still waiting to start alcohol treatment (2,414), approximately 4.8% had waited more than 6 weeks at the end of March 2012 (Table 6).

- All NHS Boards in Scotland had at least 80% of clients with ongoing waits for alcohol treatment of 6 weeks or less (Table 6).

### *All treatments*

8,598 alcohol treatments were started in Scotland in January - March 2012 (Table 7).

- Structured preparatory and motivational intervention was the most frequently accessed alcohol treatment (4,335 treatments between January - March 2012).
- Community based support and/or rehabilitation was also a common alcohol treatment with 3,302 treatments started in January - March 2012.

## Drug Treatment Waiting Times

### *First treatments*

In January - March 2012, of the 4,273 people who began drug treatment, 86.6% waited 3 weeks or less (Table 3).

- 90% of people who started treatment in January - March 2012 waited 25 days or less (Table 1).
- In all NHS Boards, except NHS Lothian and NHS Tayside, at least 80% of the people starting drug treatment did so after waiting 3 weeks or less (Table 3).

Of those who were still waiting to start drug treatment (1,312 people), 3.1% had waited more than 6 weeks at the end of March 2012 (Table 6).

- In all mainland NHS Boards in Scotland, at least 80% of people with ongoing waits for drug treatment had been waiting 6 weeks or less (Table 6).

### *All treatments*

5,133 drug treatments were started in Scotland in January – March 2012 (Table 7).

- Structured preparatory and motivational intervention was the most frequently accessed drug treatment (2,220 treatments between January – March 2012).
- Community based support and/ or rehabilitation was also a common drug treatment with 1,741 treatments started in January – March 2012.

## Service compliance

In January to March 2012, 267 out of 271 (98.5%) services submitted data.

Table 9 shows that the number of services returning data within each ADP. It is important to take account of this information when interpreting data.

ADPs are asked to encourage services to submit data. ISD will continue to work closely with ADPs to ensure that data on the web system is as up to date as possible for future quarterly extracts.

## Glossary

DATWT Drug and Alcohol Treatment Waiting Times

ADAT Alcohol and Drug Action Team

ADP Alcohol and Drug Partnership

HEAT Health improvement, Efficiency, Access, Treatment

ISD Information Services Division

For more information on treatment types see the document at [HEAT A11: Updated Drug and Alcohol Treatment Types](#)

## List of tables

Table No.	Name	Time period	File & size
1	<a href="#">January - March 2012 DATWT Tables</a>	Jan – Mar 2012	Excel [1051kb]



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## Further Information

Further information can be found on the [ISD website](#)

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Appendix

## A1 – Background Information

The [National Drug Waiting Times Information Framework](#) was introduced in April 2004. This included guidance and definitions on data items to be collected for drug waiting times. The aim of the framework was to give Alcohol and Drug Action Teams (ADATs) a consistent structure for local monitoring of treatment services.

In February 2007, ISD provided ADATs with a revised data collection system that enabled ADATs to produce a wider range of reports and also provided the facility for ADATs to monitor data quality more easily.

Operational structures changed in October 2009, when the 22 ADATs were dissolved and replaced by 30 Alcohol and Drug Partnerships (ADPs). The Waiting Times Framework was designed to function at ADAT level.

In April 2011 an improved Drug and Alcohol Treatment Waiting Times Database went live across Scotland. This was the first time that data on alcohol as well as drug treatments was recorded nationally, and the first time information was available on the full client journey from assessment to treatment. This database also facilitates reporting at ADP level.

The benefits of the database are:

- ADPs will have more accurate waiting times information to monitor equity of access for drug and alcohol clients across their local area.
- ADPs can use this information to hold meaningful, informed discussions with agencies about blockages in the system.
- ADPs will be able to identify treatment 'types' that have the longest wait.
- ADPs will be able to monitor levels of non-attendance and long waits and use this information for service redesign.
- ADPs can monitor the data themselves, producing reports from the system to show their progress towards the HEAT target, services with long waits, and records which have not been updated.
- ADPs can measure the full wait from Referral to Treatment in one stage.
- The database records periods of unavailability so a service is not penalised if, for example, a client is on holiday, or in prison.
- Nine different treatment 'types' are recorded giving a more specific detailed breakdown of the kind of treatments being accessed by clients.

More information: <http://www.drugmisuse.isdscotland.org/wtpilot/waiting.htm>

## A2 – Publication Metadata (including revisions details)

Metadata Indicator	Description
Publication title	Drug and Alcohol Treatment Waiting Times Report January to March 2012
Description	Data is presented on the number of clients seen and the length of time they waited to be seen for drug or alcohol treatment interventions. Data is shown by Health Board and Alcohol and Drug Partnership area.
Theme	Health and Social Care
Topic	Access and Waiting Times
Format	PDF report with Excel tables
Data source(s)	Extract taken from the national Drugs and Alcohol Treatment Waiting Times Database
Date that data is acquired	Monday 7 <sup>th</sup> May 2012
Release date	Tuesday 26 <sup>th</sup> June 2012
Frequency	Quarterly
Timeframe of data and timeliness	The timeframe for this publication is January - March 2012. The publication is considered timely as there have been no delays.
Continuity of data	This is the fourth publication of data from the current Drug and Alcohol Treatment Waiting Times Database. It is not comparable with data previously published from the old Drug Waiting Times Framework
Revisions Statement	Planned Revisions are a feature of this publications release: historic data will be revised.
Revisions relevant to this publication	<p>Historic data has been revised to account for waiting times records which are belatedly updated on the web system and/or services which were previously not included for data quality reasons.</p> <p>A minor change to the way waiting times is calculated was made between the April-June and July-September publications, affecting approximately 3% of records. The April – June data has been refreshed to reflect this. More details on the changes can be found <a href="#">here</a>.</p>
Concepts and definitions	<a href="http://www.drugmisuse.isdscotland.org/wtpilot/waiting.htm">http://www.drugmisuse.isdscotland.org/wtpilot/waiting.htm</a>
Relevance and key uses of the statistics	Key uses of Drug and Alcohol Treatment Waiting Times Information include: performance management, monitoring against the HEAT A11 target and service planning.
Accuracy	The current Alcohol and Drug Treatment Waiting Times Database has strong inbuilt validation. It also allows ISD to monitor data quality throughout the quarter, and for ADPs and services to run reports on their data to highlight any problems which can then be amended.
Completeness	This quarter there was 98.5% compliance from the services.
Comparability	Not comparable out with Scotland
Accessibility	It is the policy of ISD Scotland to make its web sites and products accessible according to <a href="#">published guidelines</a> .
Coherence and clarity	The report is available as a PDF file with tables linked for

	ease of use.
Value type and unit of measure	Numbers and percentage of clients who have started treatment or number of clients still waiting to start treatment.
Disclosure	There is considered to be a low risk of disclosure.
Official Statistics designation	Official Statistics
UK Statistics Authority Assessment	Awaiting assessment
Last published	27 <sup>th</sup> March 2012
Next published	25 <sup>th</sup> September 2012
Date of first publication	December 2004
Help email	<a href="mailto:nss.isd-DATWT@nhs.net">nss.isd-DATWT@nhs.net</a>
Date form completed	30 <sup>th</sup> May 2012

## **A3 – Early Access details (including Pre-Release Access)**

### **Pre-Release Access**

Under terms of the "Pre-Release Access to Official Statistics (Scotland) Order 2008", ISD are obliged to publish information on those receiving Pre-Release Access ("Pre-Release Access" refers to statistics in their final form prior to publication). The standard maximum Pre-Release Access is five working days. Shown below are details of those receiving standard Pre-Release Access and, separately, those receiving extended Pre-Release Access.

#### **Standard Pre-Release Access:**

Scottish Government Health Department  
NHS Board Chief Executives  
NHS Board Communication leads

#### **Extended Pre-Release Access**

Extended Pre-Release Access of 8 working days is given to a small number of named individuals in the Scottish Government Health Department (Analytical Services Division). This Pre-Release Access is for the sole purpose of enabling that department to gain an understanding of the statistics prior to briefing others in Scottish Government (during the period of standard Pre-Release Access).

Scottish Government Health Department (Analytical Services Division)  
Scottish Government Justice Department (Analytical Services Division)

#### **Early Access for Management Information**

These statistics will also have been made available to those who needed access to 'management information', ie as part of the delivery of health and care:

Scottish Government Drug Policy Unit  
Scottish Government Alcohol Policy Unit

#### **Early Access for Quality Assurance**

These statistics will also have been made available to those who needed access to help quality assure the publication:

Alcohol and Drug Partnership Coordinators

## A4 – ISD and Official Statistics

### About ISD

Scotland has some of the best health service data in the world combining high quality, consistency, national coverage and the ability to link data to allow patient based analysis and follow up.

Information Services Division (ISD) is a business operating unit of NHS National Services Scotland and has been in existence for over 40 years. We are an essential support service to NHSScotland and the Scottish Government and others, responsive to the needs of NHSScotland as the delivery of health and social care evolves.

**Purpose:** To deliver effective national and specialist intelligence services to improve the health and wellbeing of people in Scotland.

**Mission:** Better Information, Better Decisions, Better Health

**Vision:** To be a valued partner in improving health and wellbeing in Scotland by providing a world class intelligence service.

### Official Statistics

Information Services Division (ISD) is the principal and authoritative source of statistics on health and care services in Scotland. ISD is designated by legislation as a producer of 'Official Statistics'. Our official statistics publications are produced to a high professional standard and comply with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. The Code of Practice is produced and monitored by the UK Statistics Authority which is independent of Government. Under the Code of Practice, the format, content and timing of statistics publications are the responsibility of professional staff working within ISD.

ISD's statistical publications are currently classified as one of the following:

- National Statistics (ie assessed by the UK Statistics Authority as complying with the Code of Practice)
- National Statistics (ie legacy, still to be assessed by the UK Statistics Authority)
- Official Statistics (ie still to be assessed by the UK Statistics Authority)
- other (not Official Statistics)

Further information on ISD's statistics, including compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics, and on the UK Statistics Authority, is available on the [ISD website](#).