

Publication Summary



National Drug and Alcohol Treatment Waiting Times Report

January - March 2012

26 June 2012

About this Release

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 quarterly release from the Drug and Alcohol Treatment Waiting times Database contains quarterly data from 1 January 2012 to 31 March 2012 at national, NHS Board and Alcohol and Drug Partnership (ADP) level. Information on the number of people seen, the time waited and types of treatment accessed is included. This is the fourth quarter of data from the database reporting on waiting times data for the full journey for both drug and alcohol treatments.

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%.

Background

These data were collected using the Drug and Alcohol Treatment Waiting Times Database which went live across Scotland on 1 April 2011. The system enables the addition of data items to measure the full wait from referral to treatment for both drug and alcohol services, and can calculate the time a person waits for treatment. Information is also collected on whether the individual *could not* or *did not* attend offered appointments and allows for periods of unavailability to be recorded. Prior to the introduction of the current database, information was only collected on drug treatment waiting times. Trend data for drug waiting times prior to April 2011 is not published as the current data is not comparable with data from the old system.

There are some things to take into account when interpreting the data. First, it is important to be aware that in areas with few people seeking treatment or being treated, a change in a small number can cause a disproportionate change in a trend, such that a large percentage increase or decrease may not be meaningful for that area. Second, the number of services submitting data varies from area to area, and within areas, over time. Third, in order to appropriately meet the wide range of demand for drug and alcohol treatment services across Scotland, services are tailored to local needs. Consequently, comparisons of data across quarters, NHS Boards and ADPs may be misleading and should be treated with caution.

Finally, ISD has been working closely with ADPs and services to ensure their records are as up to date as possible, and this could be partly responsible for the improved performance with ongoing waits.

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.

Contact

General enquiries: NSS.ISD-DATWT@nhs.net

Further Information

Further information can be found in the [Full Publication Report](#) or on the [ISD website](#)

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 Health Department and others, responsive to the needs of NHSScotland as the delivery of health and social care evolves.

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.

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](http://www.isdscotland.org/About-ISD/About-Our-Statistics/) www.isdscotland.org/About-ISD/About-Our-Statistics/