

Publication Report



National Drug and Alcohol Treatment Waiting Times Report

July – September 2013

Publication Date – 17 December 2013

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Introduction

This publication presents data from the Drug and Alcohol Treatment Waiting Times database (DATWT). 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. Statistics on waiting times make it possible for a wide range of users to have a clear picture of this aspect of the performance of the NHS across Scotland.

The Scottish Government 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 is one of the national [HEAT](#) (Health improvement, Efficiency, Access, Treatment) targets, number A11. This target was achieved in March 2013 and has now become a standard.

This publication now presents data for clients in prison. However this is a new area of data collection and, like any new system, it will take time to embed and to assure the quality of the data. Consequently, prison waiting times data is published separately but is expected to be the same level of performance in line with the delivery of the HEAT standard for drug and alcohol treatment waiting times.

Information about waiting times for drug and alcohol treatment is provided by the treatment services and collected in the DATWT database which went live across Scotland on 1st July 2011. The DATWT database collates 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 that were 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.

Key points

- In July-September 2013, 96.6% of the 12,064 people who started their first drug or alcohol treatment had waited 3 weeks or less (HEAT standard), compared to 96.0% in the previous quarter.
- 97.1% of the 7,955 people who started alcohol treatment between July and September 2013 had waited 3 weeks or less, compared to 96.2% in the previous quarter.
- 95.7% of the 4,109 people who attended an appointment for drug treatment waited 3 weeks or less, compared to 95.6% in the previous quarter.
- Of the 2,907 people who were still waiting to start drug or alcohol treatment, 101 people, or 3.5%, had waited more than 6 weeks at the end of September 2013, compared to 82 people, or 2.6% in the previous quarter.

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:

There is a wide range of demand for substance misuse 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 ADP.

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 potentially meaningless change in percentages.

Services are required to submit accurate and up-to-date information to the DATWT. It is the responsibility of the ADPs to ensure the compliance of the services, including prisons, in their area and to help them assure the quality of the data they submit. ISD continue to monitor the number of services submitting data, levels of submission and provide additional training where necessary. The DATWT web system also has inbuilt validation to ensure high quality data.

Although the number of services included in each quarter of data varies, the percentage of services submitting data (compliance) across Scotland is consistently greater than 95% therefore this has little effect on the comparability and reliability of data published. See Table 9 for information on compliance across Scotland.

This publication now includes waiting times data for drug and alcohol treatment in prisons. ISD are working with NHS boards and ADPs to ensure that compliance is high and that the data collected and submitted to the DATWT database is accurate and reliable. Currently 15 ADPs submit data for a total of 16 prisons in Scotland.

When DATWT data are extracted for reporting it is a snapshot of what is on the system at that time. The DATWT is a dynamic database, which means that 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. The revisions generally have a greater impact on the number and distribution of ongoing waits with the percentage waiting less than 3/5 weeks statistics likely to be revised upwards in future publications.

Drug and Alcohol Treatment Waiting times

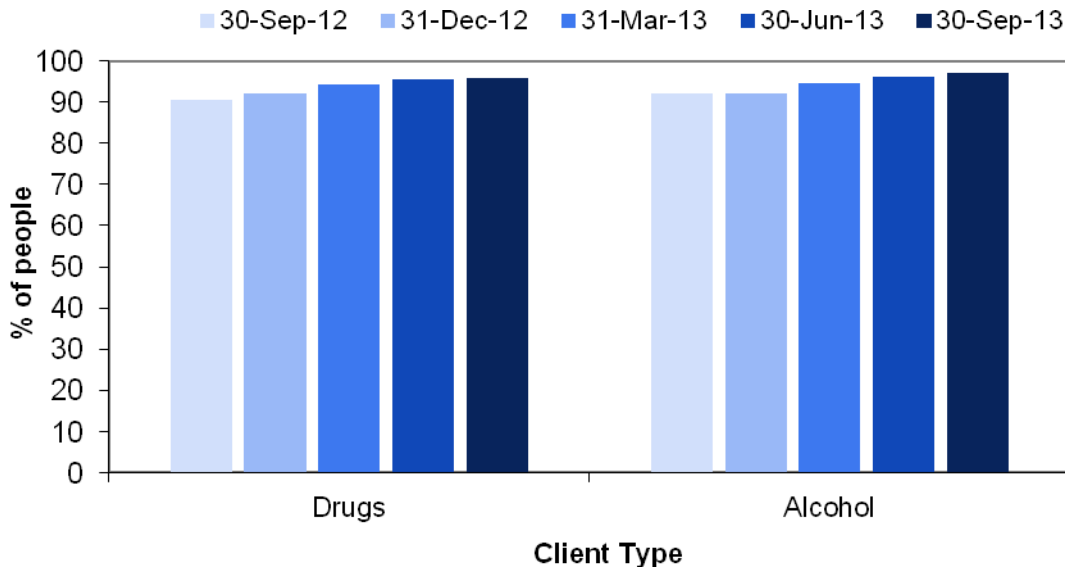
The Scottish Government set a target (HEAT A11) that by March 2013, 90% of people who need help with their drug or alcohol problem will wait no longer than three weeks for treatment that supports their recovery. This target was achieved in March 2013 and has now become a HEAT standard.

HEAT standard

- In July-September 2013, of the 12,064 people who started their first drug or alcohol treatment, 96.6% had waited 3 weeks or less and 56.9% had waited one week or less (Table 3).
- Of the 2,907 people who were still waiting to start drug or alcohol treatment at the end of September 2013, 101 people, or 3.5% had been waiting for more than 6 weeks (Table 6).

People Referred for Drug or Alcohol treatment in Scotland:

% seen within 3 weeks



First Treatments

This section includes information on people who began their first treatment or were waiting to begin first treatment for alcohol or drug use during July–September 2013

Alcohol Treatment Waiting Times

In July-September 2013, 97.1% of the 7,955 people who began alcohol treatment waited 3 weeks or less from the date of referral (Table 3).

- 90% of people who started treatment in July-September 2013 waited 17 days or less (Table 1).
- In all NHS Boards in Scotland, except NHS Highland, at least 90% of people who started alcohol treatment waited 3 weeks or less (Table 3).

Of the 1,774 people in Scotland still waiting to start alcohol treatment at end of September 2013:

- Approximately 2.8% (49 people) had waited more than 6 weeks (Table 6).
- In all NHS Boards in Scotland, except NHS Forth Valley and NHS Highland, at least 90% of people with ongoing waits for alcohol treatment had been waiting 6 weeks or less (Table 6).

Drug Treatment Waiting Times

In June-September 2013, of the 4,109 people who began drug treatment, 95.7% waited 3 weeks or less (Table 3).

- 90% of people who started treatment in June-September 2013 waited 18 days or less. (Table 1).
- In all NHS Boards in Scotland, except NHS Highland and Outer Hebrides NHS/ADP at least 90% of people starting drug treatment waited 3 weeks or less (Table 3).

Of the 1,133 people who were still waiting to start drug treatment at the end of September 2013:

- Approximately 4.6% (52 people) had waited more than 6 weeks (Table 6).
- In all NHS Boards in Scotland, except NHS Forth Valley and NHS Highland, at least 90% of people with ongoing waits for drug treatment had been waiting 6 weeks or less (Table 6).

All Treatments

The DATWT Web system collects data on nine separate treatment types. These have been aggregated into 5 groups: Structured preparatory and motivational intervention; Prescribed drug treatment (includes prescribing by GP or specialist); Community based detoxification, community based support and/ or rehabilitation (includes structured psychosocial interventions, structured day programmes and other structured, and Residential Detoxification and Rehabilitation (includes residential rehabilitation and residential detoxification/ inpatient treatment)

All treatments includes any treatments for alcohol or drug use started during July-September 2013, which may be first or subsequent treatments.

9,145 alcohol treatments were started in Scotland in July-September 2013 (Table 7).

- Structured preparatory and motivational intervention was the most frequently accessed alcohol treatment (4,553 treatments between July-September 2013).
- Community based support and/or rehabilitation was also a common alcohol treatment with 3,732 treatments started in July-September 2013.

5,050 drug treatments were started in Scotland in July-September 2013 (Table 7).

- Structured preparatory and motivational intervention was the most frequently accessed drug treatment (2,142 treatments between July-September 2013).
- Community based support and/ or rehabilitation was also a common drug treatment with 1,776 treatments started in July-September 2013.

All tables mentioned can be accessed via the [spreadsheet at this link](#).

Drug and Alcohol Treatment Waiting Times for clients in prison

- In July-September 2013, of the 1,584 people who started their first drug or alcohol treatment, 98.4% had waited 3 weeks or less and 88.6% had waited one week or less (Table 1).
- Of the 50 people who were still waiting to start drug or alcohol treatment at the end of September 2013, 3 people, or 6% had been waiting for more than 6 weeks (Table 2).
- 98.9% of the 352 people who started treatment for alcohol use between July and September 2013 had waited 3 weeks or less.
- 98.2% of the 1,232 people who started treatment for drug use waited 3 weeks or less.

Prison data tables can be accessed via the [spreadsheet at this link](#).

Service compliance

In July-September 2013, 261 of 262 (99.6%) services submitted data.

12 out of 16 prisons (75.0%) submitted data for July-September 2013.

ADPs are asked to encourage services under their respective remits to submit data; Table 9 shows the number of services returning data within each ADP.

Table 3 in the prison data tables shows the number of ADPs returning data for prisons.

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

| Excel Sheet. | Name on Tab | Time period | File & size |
|---|---|--------------|----------------|
| July-September 2013 DATWT Tables | Table 1: Completed Waits - Trend | Jul-Sep 2013 | Excel [1674kb] |
| | Table 2: Completed Waits - Distribution of Wait | | |
| | Table 3: Completed Waits - Summary | | |
| | Table 4: Ongoing Waits - Trend | | |
| | Table 5: Ongoing Waits - Distribution of Wait | | |
| | Table 6: Ongoing Waits Summary | | |
| | Table 7: Completed Waits by Treatment Type | | |
| | Table 8: Ongoing Waits by Treatment Type | | |
| | Table 9: Compliance by ADP | | |
| July-September 2013 DATWT Prison Tables | Table 1: Completed Waits - Summary | Jul-Sep 2013 | Excel (357kb) |
| | Table 2: Ongoing Waits – Summary | | |
| | Table 3: Compliance by ADP | | |

Contact

Kathryn Burt

Senior Information Analyst

kathryn.burt@nhs.net

0131 275 6676

Kathy McGregor

Principal Information Analyst

k.mcgregor2@nhs.net

0131 275 6551

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

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 July 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 July 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 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 monitor levels of non-attendance and long waits and use this information for service redesign.
- ADPs can monitor 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.

The responsibility for provision of healthcare to prisoners in Scotland was transferred from the Scottish Prison Service (SPS) to the NHS on 1st November 2011. ADPs are now responsible for the collection and submission of Drug and Alcohol Treatment waiting times in prisons.

A2 – Publication Metadata (including revisions details)

| Metadata Indicator | Description |
|--|--|
| Publication title | Drug and Alcohol Treatment Waiting Times Report July to September 2013 |
| Description | Data are presented on the number of clients seen and the length of time they waited to be seen for drug or alcohol treatment interventions. Data are shown by Health Board, Alcohol and Drug Partnership area and prison. |
| 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 | 25 October 2013 |
| Release date | 17 December 2013 |
| Frequency | Quarterly |
| Timeframe of data and timeliness | The timeframe for this publication is July– September 2013. The publication is considered timely as there have been no delays. |
| Continuity of data | These data are 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>The impact of these revisions are: Quarterly trend (Jul-Sep 2013): NHS Highland – Percentage starting treatment within 3 weeks decreased from 84.0% in Apr-Jun 2013 to 78.8% in Jul-Sep 2013.</p> <p>Individual Board and ADP figures do not vary by more than 5 percentage points unless specified.</p> |
| Concepts and definitions | <p>More information about the methods used to produce the drugs and alcohol waiting times statistics and guidance documents can be found on the ISD website:</p> <p>http://www.isdscotland.org/Health-Topics/Waiting-Times/Drugs-and-Alcohol</p> |
| Relevance and key uses of the statistics | Key uses of Drug and Alcohol Treatment Waiting Times Information include: performance management, monitoring against the HEAT standard 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 showed 99.6% compliance from the services. |
| Comparability | <p>Not directly comparable out with Scotland Drugs and alcohol waiting times may be measured differently across the UK administrations therefore it is advisable to read the publications carefully before making comparisons:</p> <p>England http://www.nta.nhs.uk/statistics.aspx</p> <p>Northern Ireland http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/stats_research/stats-public-health/stats-drug-alcohol.htm</p> <p>Wales http://wales.gov.uk/topics/housingandcommunity/safety/substancemisuse/?stats/lang=en</p> |
| Accessibility | It is the policy of ISD Scotland to make its web sites and products accessible according to published guidelines . |
| 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 | 24 September 2013 |
| Next published | 25 March 2014 |
| Date of first publication | December 2004 |
| Help email | nss.isd-DATWT@nhs.net |
| Date form completed | 03/12/2013 |

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
Scottish Prison Service

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 (i.e. assessed by the UK Statistics Authority as complying with the Code of Practice)
- National Statistics (i.e. legacy, still to be assessed by the UK Statistics Authority)
- Official Statistics (i.e. 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](#).