

Publication Report



Emergency Department Waiting Times

(formerly Accident & Emergency Waiting Times)

Quarter ending 30 June 2011

Publication date – 30 August 2011



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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](#).

The United Kingdom Statistics Authority has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. Designation can be broadly interpreted to mean that the statistics:

- meet identified user needs;
- are well explained and readily accessible;
- are produced according to sound methods, and
- are managed impartially and objectively in the public interest.

Once statistics have been designated as National Statistics it is a statutory requirement that the Code of Practice shall continue to be observed.

Introduction

The national standard for Emergency Department (ED) waiting times states that at least 98 % of patients should be seen and then admitted, transferred or discharged within 4 hours. This standard applies to all areas of emergency care such as assessment units, minor injury units, community hospitals, health centres, anywhere where emergency care type activity takes place. The 4-hour waiting time standard came into place in 2007 and continues to be the measure by which the Scottish Government (SG) monitors NHS boards' performance within EDs.

This release presents a monthly summary of attendances and 4-hour waiting times figures for patients attending EDs in Scotland up to and including 30 June 2011.

In order to reduce the number of attendances at EDs across Scotland, the SG has introduced a [HEAT target](#) performance measure. NHS Boards are tasked with reductions in the rates of attendance at EDs between 2009/10 and 2013/14. The aim is to reduce attendances with better provision and use of primary care services, better preventative and continuous care in the home and improved self care.

For the first time we are presenting the figures for rate of attendance. This release includes a monthly summary of rate of attendances for EDs in Scotland up to and including 30 June 2011.

Please note that previous releases of this publication were known as 'Accident and Emergency Waiting Times'. The naming convention of 'Accident and Emergency (A&E) Department' has been updated to the more accurate term 'Emergency Department'. However, in some instances there may still be reference to the former term.

Key points

- During the quarter ending 30 June 2011, the proportion of patients attending Emergency Departments across Scotland that were seen within 4 hours was; 95.9 % in April, 96.0 % in May and 96.0 % in June*.
- During the quarter ending 30 June 2011, the number of patients attending Emergency Departments across Scotland was approximately; 139,200 in April, 143,300 in May and 126,600 in June*.
- During the quarter ending 30 June 2011, the rate of attendance (per 100,000 population) at Emergency Departments across Scotland was approximately; 2,670 in April, 2,740 in May and 2,620 in June*.

* Scotland figures for June 2011 exclude NHS Ayrshire & Arran. See note 1 for further details.

Results and Commentary

In the 12 months to June 2011, the number of patients attending Emergency Departments (ED) across Scotland each month ranged from approximately 119,000 (February 2011) to 144,200 (Aug 2010).

In the same time period, the proportion of patients seen within 4 hours ranged from 93.6 % (January 2011) to 97.9 % (July 2010).

Monthly figures for the latest published quarter are shown in the table below.

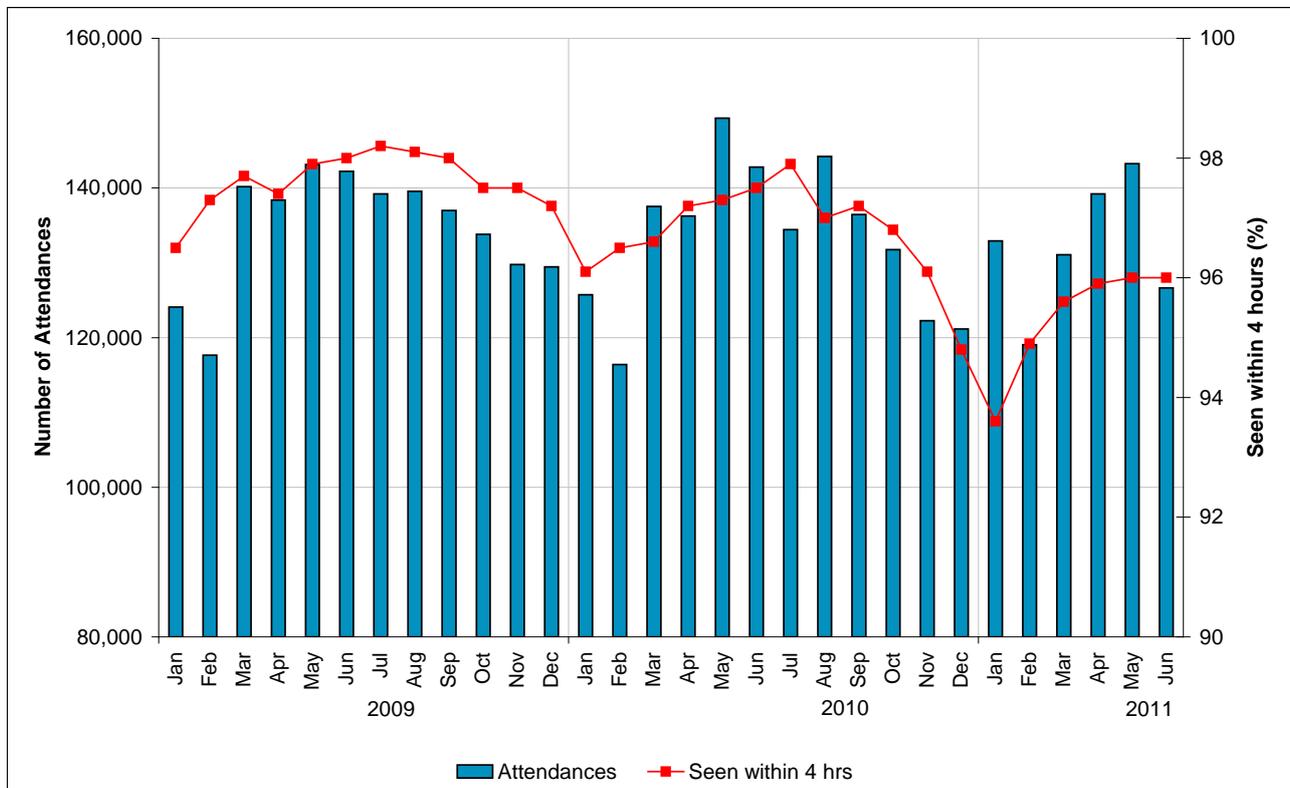
Table 1: Number of attendances at Emergency Departments across Scotland and proportion of those seen within 4 hours, April 2011 to June 2011.

Month	Number of attendances	Seen within 4 hours (%)
Apr-11	139,202	95.9
May-11	143,259	96.0
Jun-11*	126,636	96.0

*excludes NHS Ayrshire & Arran (see note 1)

The longer term monthly trend since January 2009 is illustrated in the chart below.

Chart 1: Number of attendances at Emergency Departments across Scotland and proportion of those seen within 4 hours, April 2011 to June 2011.



In the 12 months to June 2011, the rate of attendance at Emergency Departments (ED) across Scotland each month ranged from approximately 2,290 (February 2011) to 2,780 (Aug 2010) per 100,000 population.

Table 2: Number and rate of attendance at Emergency Departments across Scotland, April 2011 to June 2011.

Month	Number of attendances	Attendance rate (per 100,000)
Apr-11	139,202	2,666
May-11	143,259	2,743
Jun-11*	126,636	2,617

*excludes NHS Ayrshire & Arran (see note 1)

Further Data

- Comparable information on attendances and performance against the 4 hour waiting time standard broken down by NHS Board and at individual site level is available on the ISD website (refer to Tables 1 to 3 in the link below).
- Comparable information on attendances and rate of attendances broken down by NHS Board is available on the ISD website (refer to Table 4 in the link below)

[ED attendances and waiting times: 2011-12](#)  [109 KB] [pdf](#)  [103 KB]

Historical Data

Previously published ED attendances and waiting times data is available on the [Emergency Departments Statistics](#) webpage.

Notes

1) NHS Ayrshire and Arran have not yet submitted data for June 2011 as a result of staff changes within the board. This results in a shortfall of approximately 7 % in attendances for the Scotland total. Based on local provisional information, NHS Ayrshire & Arran have advised ISD that the June performance against the 4-hour standard is comparable with previous months. The attendance rate for Scotland has been calculated based on the Scotland population minus NHS Ayrshire & Arran population.

2) Borders General Hospital (NHS Borders) transferred to a new patient management system at the end of November 2010. There is an on-going issue with the new system that prevents the recording of different attendance categories, this may result in the attendance figures for Borders General being artificially inflated by approximately 0.8 % (estimated from the data 12 months leading up to transfer), please interpret with caution.

3) The three EDs in NHS Lanarkshire have recently transferred to a new patient management system during March 2011. No data has been submitted for the three EDs over the period 14 to 24 March due to issues with data quality. Consequently, the number of attendances are undercounted for the month of March 2011, please interpret with caution. We consider the performance figures of the data submitted to be representative of

the whole month. In addition, there is an on-going issue with the new system that prevents the recording of different attendance categories, this may result in the attendance figures for the three EDs being artificially inflated by approximately 5.0 % (estimated from the data 12 months leading up to transfer), please interpret with caution.

Glossary

Emergency Department (ED)	a hospital department which provides a service primarily for the reception, assessment, examination and treatment of patients who have been involved in an accident, or have sustained an injury or who have an acute surgical or medical emergency which may require hospital facilities
Accident & Emergency (A&E) department	synonym of Emergency Department (ED)
Attendance	the presence of a patient in an A&E department seeking unplanned medical attention
Four hour performance	the proportion of all attendances in a calendar month that are seen within 4 hours of arrival
Patients Seen	patients who are assessed by a clinician then either admitted to hospital, discharged or transferred to another hospital

List of Tables

Table No.	Name	Time period	File & size
Excel Workbook	ED attendances and waiting times: 2011-12	1 April – 30 June 2011	Excel [109kb]

Contact

Gary King

Senior Information Analyst

nss.isdaewaiting@nhs.net

0141 282 2024

Richard Hunter

Principal Information Analyst

nss.isdaewaiting@nhs.net

0131 275 6957

Further Information

Further information on Emergency Department Waiting Times can be found on the [Emergency Departments Waiting Times](#) pages of the ISD website.

Further details on ISD publications and available information can be found on the [ISD website](#).

Appendix

A1 – Background Information

Data on Emergency Department (ED) attendances across Scotland is collected and maintained by ISD in the national data warehouse known as the A&E data mart. Data is collected on local systems, then extracted and submitted to the data mart soon after the end of each month. All sites that provide emergency care are required to submit data to the A&E data mart.

There are two types of data submitted to the A&E data mart; episode and aggregate level data. The larger hospitals with EDs generally submit episode level data containing a detailed record for each patient attendance. Smaller sites such as minor injury units or community hospitals generally only submit aggregate level data. The smaller sites only submit total monthly attendance figures as they do not have the information systems and support to enable collection of detailed patient based information.

ED attendances are also collected as part of the ISD(S)1 data submission. This data provides aggregate numbers of attendances going back to 2001, and can be found on the [Acute Hospital Activity](#) pages of the ISD website.

A2 – Publication Metadata (including revisions details)

Metadata Indicator	Description
Publication title	Emergency Department Waiting Times
Description	Monthly summary of numbers of attendances at emergency departments and proportion of those waiting less than 4 hours
Theme	Health and Social Care
Topic	Access and Waiting Times
Format	Excel workbooks and PDF
Data source(s)	A&E data mart
Date that data are acquired	4 August 2011
Release date	The last Tuesday of the month for each publication
Frequency	Quarterly
Timeframe of data and timeliness	From 1 April 2011 to 30 June 2011
Continuity of data	<p>1) NHS Ayrshire and Arran have not yet submitted data for June 2011 as a result of staff changes within the board. This results in a shortfall of approximately 7 % in attendances for the Scotland total. Based on local provisional information, NHS Ayrshire & Arran have advised ISD that the June performance against the 4-hour standard is comparable with previous months. The attendance rate for Scotland has been calculated based on the Scotland population minus NHS Ayrshire & Arran population.</p> <p>2) Borders General Hospital (NHS Borders) transferred to a new patient management system at the end of November 2010. There is an on-going issue with the new system that prevents the recording of different attendance categories, this may result in the attendance figures for Borders General being artificially inflated by approximately 0.8 % (estimated from the data 12 months leading up to transfer), please interpret with caution.</p> <p>3) The three EDs in NHS Lanarkshire have recently transferred to a new patient management system during March 2011. No data has been submitted for the three EDs over the period 14 to 24 March due to issues with data quality. Consequently, the number of attendances are undercounted for the month of March 2011, please interpret with caution. We consider the performance figures of the data submitted to be representative of the whole month. In addition, there is an on-going issue with the new system that prevents the recording of different attendance categories, this may result in the attendance figures for the three EDs being artificially inflated by approximately 5.0 % (estimated from the data 12 months leading up to transfer), please interpret with caution.</p>
Concepts and definitions	<p>Details of data items collected and validation process : A&E Users Guide</p> <p>Data item codes, descriptions and definitions: A&E: Codes</p>

	<p>and Values</p>
<p>Relevance and key uses of the statistics</p>	<p>Waiting times are important to patients and are a measure of how the NHS is responding to demands for services. Measuring and regular reporting of waiting times highlights where there are delays in the system and enables monitoring of the effectiveness of NHS performance throughout the country. The NHS in Scotland has been set a number of targets for maximum waiting times.</p> <p>Other uses of the data include information requests for a variety of customers, e.g. research charities; public companies; freedom of Information requests; information support to Boards; parliamentary questions.</p>
<p>Accuracy</p>	<p>In addition to any local data quality checks, the data submitted to the A&E data mart is subject to a validation procedure. For a list of the validation rules refer to Appendix A of the A&E User Guide. As well as ensuring that data for the correct site and time period is submitted, the validation ensures that the data is in the correct format and only contains accepted codes, refer to A&E: Codes and Values.</p> <p>If the submission file does not meet all of the validation rules then the whole file is rejected. The resulting errors are reported back to the submitting site where they must be amended and the file resubmitted. Once the file passes validation it is loaded into the data mart where it is then available for analysis and reporting. ISD works closely with colleagues in the NHS boards to improve the validation and accuracy of the data and to ensure that the appropriate data standards are understood and applied by all sites.</p> <p>Each month a suite of performance and monitoring reports are produced and sent to the SG. These are reviewed and any unusual or unexpected figures are raised with the NHS board for confirmation. Before the 4 hour waiting times data is published each quarter, the figures are sent back to the NHS boards to confirm their accuracy. If changes are required then they must be explained fully by the NHS board and the data is resubmitted. A log is kept noting any changes that are necessary.</p>
<p>Completeness</p>	<p>Following on from the Audit Scotland Review of Emergency Departments in 2010 a programme of work has begun in order to develop training for NHS Board staff on the completion and understanding of A&E data items, particularly those used for national reporting purposes. In addition to this, ongoing monitoring of the quality of data has begun; this covers the completeness, timeliness and accuracy of data recorded. Biannual meetings with data providers are being established to discuss all aspects of A&E data including data quality.</p>
<p>Accessibility</p>	<p>It is the policy of ISD Scotland to make its web sites and</p>

	products accessible according to published guidelines. See attached link for further details: http://www.isdscotland.org/isd/2412.html
Value type and unit of measurement	Count of total attendances. Count of attendances seen within 4 hours. Proportion of attendances seen within 4 hours.
Disclosure	The ISD protocol on Statistical Disclosure Protocol is followed.
Official Statistics designation	National Statistics
UK Statistics Authority Assessment	Assessed by UK Statistics Authority as part of the Statistics on NHS Waiting Times in Scotland report.
Last published	31 May 2011
Next published	29 November 2011
Date of first publication	Data available from 1 July 2007 (with data from main Emergency Departments back to 1 March 2006)
Help email	nss.isdaewaiting@nhs.net
Date form completed	17 August 2011

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)