Publication Summary

Audiology Waiting Times

Quarter ending 30 September 2012

Publication date – 27 November 2012

About this Release

The Scottish Government has set a standard for the NHS in Scotland to achieve an 18 weeks maximum wait from referral to treatment, with Audiology services to be measured as part of this.

This quarterly release details a summary of patients' completed waits and ongoing waits for the following audiology stages of treatment:

- audiology assessment (first contact)
- assessment to fitting of hearing aid(s)
- assessment to treatment (where treatment is other than fitting of a hearing aid)
- fitting of hearing aid(s) to review (this stage is not subject to the 18 Weeks standard)
- one-stop clinic (assessment and treatment at the same appointment)

Key Points

- During the quarter ending September 2012, approximately 24 000 patients were seen by an audiology specialist following either referral to audiology assessment (first contact) or a one-stop clinic.

- Nationally, waiting times for an audiology assessment (first contact) appointment have improved in the last year, with an average (median) wait of six weeks in quarter ending September 2011 compared to five weeks at quarter ending September 2012.

- Approximately half of patients seen by an audiology specialist between July and September 2012 had their assessment (first contact) appointment within five weeks of being referred and 87.7% within 12 weeks.

- Approximately half of patients were fitted with a hearing aid within five weeks of their assessment appointment and 92.6% within 12 weeks.

- For those sites which report on one-stop clinics, 88.2% of patients attended and were treated within 18 weeks (within 126 days) of their referral to that service.

Background

Waiting times for Audiology services are currently subject to the 18 weeks Referral To Treatment standard. However, in the absence of complete journey measurement for audiology services, formal arrangements to collect 'stage of treatment' audiology data nationally have been in place since December 2008. NHS Boards work to locally agreed 'stage of treatment' targets which total 18 weeks (e.g. maximum 11 week wait from referral to assessment and a maximum 7 week wait from assessment to fitting of hearing aid).

As NHS Boards progress towards managing their patients along an 18 Weeks Referral To Treatment pathway, several NHS Boards have introduced one-stop clinics, where patients can be assessed and treated in a single appointment. An increasing number of NHS Boards are identifying those patients who received a one-stop service.

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Further Information

Further information can be found in the Full Publication Report or on the ISD website

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