

Publication Report



Audiology Waiting Times

Quarter Ending 31 December 2013

Publication date – 25 February 2014

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Introduction

This publication presents information about how long patients (adults and children) have waited for Audiology assessment and treatment provided by the NHS in Scotland. Audiology treatments include the fitting of hearing aids, treatment of symptoms of [tinnitus](#) and helping patients with balance problems.

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 highlight where there are delays in the system and enables monitoring of the effectiveness of NHS Scotland's performance. Information Services Division (ISD) Scotland continues to be committed to improving the information on waiting times along with our key stakeholders, the NHS Boards and Scottish Government.

This quarterly release covers the period up to 31 December 2013 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)

For more information on NHS Boards submitting data to ISD for the above stages of treatment please see the [Background Information](#).

The Scottish Government require the NHS in Scotland to measure the time waited by patients for treatment, which includes the specialty of Audiology. The Scottish Government has set a standard for the NHS in Scotland to achieve an 18 weeks maximum wait from referral to treatment. At the moment, patients who attend Audiology services have their time recorded and measured at each 'stage of treatment' i.e. time to assessment and time to treatment. These figures are used to assess how the service is performing against the 18 weeks waiting time standard.

It is important to be aware that information on Audiology waiting times is recorded in different ways in different locations. For example, some NHS Boards offer a one-stop clinic where suitable patients receive a specialist consultation and undergo treatment at the same visit. The way in which waiting times are recorded for these one-stop clinics varies between NHS Boards. See the [one-stop clinic table](#) in the Data Quality section of this report for more detail.

It is not yet possible to comment on long term trends in Scottish waiting times for Audiology as complete data has not been available until recently, therefore the data in this publication is classified as developmental.

Key points

- During the quarter ending 31 December 2013, 26,974 patients were seen by an Audiology Specialist following either referral to Audiology assessment (first contact) or a one-stop clinic.
- Approximately half of patients seen by an Audiology specialist during quarter ending 31 December 2013 had their assessment (first contact) appointment within 5 weeks of being referred and 92.9% within 12 weeks. This has increased from 86.2% seen within 12 weeks during the quarter ending 31 December 2012.
- Approximately half of patients were fitted with a hearing aid within 5 weeks of their assessment appointment and 97.5% within 12 weeks. This has increased from 92.6% fitted within 12 weeks of their assessment during the quarter ending 31 December 2012.
- For those sites which report on one-stop clinics, 91.4% of patients attended and were treated within 18 weeks (within 126 days) of their referral to that service, an increase from 81.2% seen within 18 weeks during the quarter ending 31 December 2012.

Results and Commentary

Current waiting time standard

Audiology waiting times are subject to the Referral to Treatment standard of 18 weeks. However, NHS Boards work to locally agreed 'stage of treatment' targets which total 18 weeks (for example, maximum 11 week wait from referral to assessment and a maximum 7 week wait from assessment to fitting of hearing aid). As each NHS Board is measured against a different target, it is appropriate to compare patients who waited beyond 12 weeks.

Audiology 'one-stop clinics' are subject to the 18 weeks Referral to Treatment standard as the patient receives a specialist consultation and, where appropriate, commences treatment at the same visit.

How long patients waited

This section details completed waits; the waiting times on patients who have been seen.

Table 1 shows that:

- Approximately half of patients seen by an Audiology Specialist during quarter ending 31 December 2013 had their assessment (first contact) appointment within 5 weeks of being referred and 92.9% within 12 weeks.
- Approximately half of patients were fitted with a hearing aid within 5 weeks of their assessment appointment and 97.5% within 12 weeks.

The total number of patients seen in the quarters ending December 2012 and 2013 are detailed in Tables 1 and 1a.

Table 1: Audiology patients seen and key waits, NHS Scotland*

Stage of treatment	Patients seen		Patients waited 12 weeks or more (%)		Average weeks waited (median)	
	Quarter ending		Quarter ending		Quarter ending	
	Dec-12	Dec-13	Dec-12	Dec-13	Dec-12	Dec-13
Referral to first contact appointment	23 800	24 832	13.8	7.1	5	5
Assessment to fitting of hearing aid	9 998	10 409	7.4	2.5	5	5
Assessment to treatment (other)	4 925	5 672	1.0	0.5	0	0
Fitting of hearing aid to review ¹	4 647	4 773	31.5	21.3	9	8

¹ Fitting of hearing aid to review is not subject to the 18 week referral to treatment standard.

*For detailed statistics and to compare data at NHS Board level, please refer to the completed waits Excel file in the [List of tables](#).

Many patients are fitted with a hearing aid or commence other treatment on the same day as their first contact appointment. These treatments include, for example, addressing balance problems and treatment for tinnitus. Many patients are also referred to other specialties, such as Ear, Nose & Throat, to receive their treatment. Therefore, waiting times for other treatment tend to be low (i.e. a median wait of zero weeks (0-6 days), Table 1).

Patients waiting for a review appointment, following the fitting of a hearing aid, are not subject to the 18 weeks referral to treatment standard and patients often wait longer for these appointments; 21.3% of patients waited 12 weeks or more during quarter ending 31 December 2013 (Table 1) compared with 31.5% for the quarter ending 31 December 2012. Review appointments, which follow up the patient’s progress with a new hearing aid, are an important part of the patient’s experience and this is why waiting times are still collected for reviews.

Table 1a shows that:

- Approximately half of patients seen by an Audiology Specialist at a one-stop clinic during quarter ending 31 December 2013 were seen within 9 weeks of being referred and 91.4% within 18 weeks.

The total number of patients seen at a one-stop clinic in the quarters ending 31 December 2012 and 2013 are detailed in Table 1a.

Table 1a: Audiology patients seen at a one-stop clinic, NHS Scotland*

Stage of treatment	Patients seen		Patients waited 18 weeks or more (%)		Average weeks waited (median)	
	Quarter ending		Quarter ending		Quarter ending	
	Dec-12	Dec-13	Dec-12	Dec-13	Dec-12	Dec-13
Referral to treatment at a one-stop clinic ²	2 279	2 142	18.8	8.6	12	9

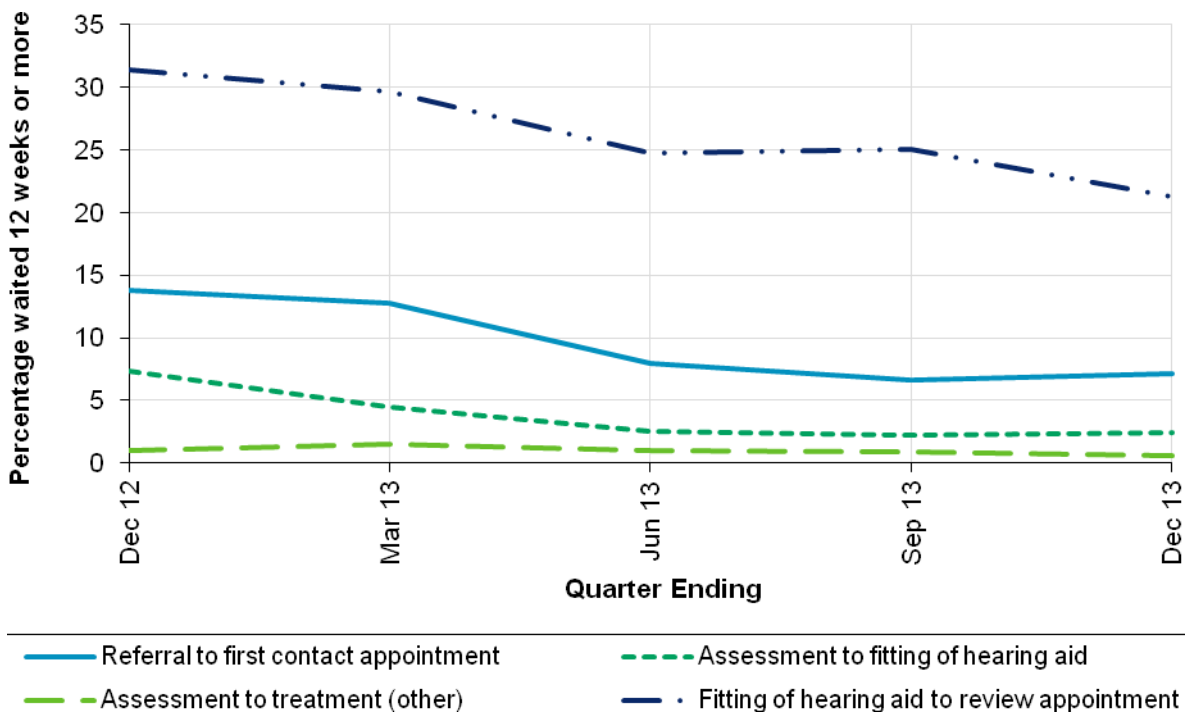
² NHS Borders, Fife, Forth Valley, Highland, Lothian and Tayside identified patients who waited for a one-stop service.

*For detailed statistics and to compare data at NHS Board level, please refer to the completed waits Excel file in the [List of tables](#).

Over the last year, the number of NHS Boards that identified patients who attended a one-stop clinic has remained the same. Refer to the [one-stop clinic table](#) for more detail around different recording practices.

Chart 1 below shows a decreasing trend in the percentage of patients who waited over 12 weeks for an assessment (first contact) appointment since the quarter ending 31 December 2012 (note that this excludes patients who received their first assessment at a one-stop clinic). The percentage of patients who waited over 12 weeks from assessment to fitting of hearing aid has also been decreasing since the quarter ending 31 December 2012. During the last 4 quarters, the percentage of patients who waited over 12 weeks for a review appointment, following the fitting of a hearing aid has dropped from 31.5% to 21.3%.

Chart 1 Percentage of audiology patients who waited 12 weeks or more, NHS Scotland



Note: Chart 1 does not show patients who received their first assessment and treatment at a one-stop clinic

The completeness of the Audiology publication data has improved in the last year, but is subject to change, as data collection and quality assurance processes continue to improve. Trends therefore should be interpreted with caution. For more information on data completeness please refer to the [data quality](#) section.

Patients waiting at month end

The information in this section presents a summary of Audiology waiting times information at Scotland level, for patients who are waiting at month end. This measure, however, does not report how long patients actually waited until they received care.

Table 2 shows that as at 31 December 2013:

- 85.8% of patients were waiting less than 12 weeks from referral to Audiology assessment (first contact).
- 99.5% of patients were waiting less than 12 weeks from Audiology assessment to fitting of hearing aid.

Summary information on the actual time that patients waited for each stage of treatment can be found in the previous section entitled '[How Long Patients waited](#)'.

Table 2: Audiology patients waiting at 31 December 2013, NHS Scotland**

Stage of treatment	Total patients waiting	6 weeks or more (%)	9 weeks or more (%)	12 weeks or more (%)
Referral to first contact appointment	11 583	43.7	21.8	14.2
Assessment to fitting of hearing aid	4 401	21.8	4.4	0.5
Assessment to treatment (other)	432	27.3	9.3	3.7
Fitting of hearing aid to review ¹	8 272	70.1	58.2	52.2

¹ Fitting of hearing aid to review is not subject to the 18 week referral to treatment standard.

** For detailed statistics and to compare data at NHS Board level, please refer to the ongoing waits Excel file in the [List of tables](#).

Table 2a shows that:

- 70.6% of patients were waiting less than 18 weeks to attend a one-stop clinic.

Table 2a: Audiology patients waiting for a one-stop clinic at 31 December 2013, NHS Scotland**

Stage of treatment	Total patients waiting	12 weeks or more (%)	18 weeks or more (%)
Referral to treatment at a one-stop clinic ²	1 983	47.0	29.4

² NHS Borders, Fife, Forth Valley, Highland, Lothian and Tayside identified patients waiting to attend a one-stop service.

** For detailed statistics and to compare data at NHS Board level, please refer to the ongoing waits Excel file in the [List of tables](#).

Patients attending a one-stop clinic receive a specialist consultation and, where appropriate, undergo treatment at the same visit and hence the waiting times can appear longer for these clinics compared with patients waiting for separate appointments for assessment and fitting of hearing aid/treatment.

Glossary

Tinnitus: A buzzing, ringing, or whistling sound in one or both ears occurring without an external stimulus

Census date: A point in time, usually month end, which is used as an end date when calculating the length of time that patients have been on a waiting list.

Patients waiting for an Audiology assessment (first contact): The number of patients who have been referred to Audiology services from any source, for assessment of any kind, waiting for a first contact appointment that will commence a new episode of care (i.e. include re-assessments). The number of patients waiting at the census date corresponds to the time that has elapsed from the receipt of the referral.

Completed wait for an Audiology assessment (first contact): The waiting time experienced by patients who received a first contact appointment, for assessment of any kind that commenced a new episode of care, during the quarter (i.e. includes re-assessments). The number of patients seen corresponds to the length of time they waited.

Patients waiting from assessment to fitting of hearing aid(s): The number of patients waiting for fitting of hearing aid(s). The number of patients waiting at the census date corresponds to the time that has elapsed from the date of the decision that a hearing aid is to be fitted.

Completed wait from assessment to fitting of hearing aid(s): The waiting time experienced by patients for fitting of hearing aid(s). The number of patients fitted with hearing aids during the quarter corresponds to the length of time that elapsed from the date of the decision that a hearing aid is to be fitted to the date of the fitting. If the hearing aid was fitted at the first contact appointment, the waiting time experienced by the patient is recorded as zero weeks.

Patients waiting from assessment to treatment: The number of patients waiting for Audiology treatment other than the fitting of a hearing aid, this includes but is not limited to; treatment of balance problems, tinnitus treatment and counselling. The number of patients waiting at the census date corresponds to the time that has elapsed from the date of the decision to treat.

Completed wait from assessment to treatment: The waiting time experienced by patients for Audiology treatment other than the fitting of a hearing aid, this includes but is not limited to; treatment of balance problems, tinnitus treatment and counselling. The number of patients treated during the quarter corresponds to the length of time that elapsed from the date of the decision to treat to the date of treatment. If the treatment was administered at the first contact appointment, the waiting time experienced by the patient is recorded as zero weeks.

Patients waiting from fitting of hearing aid(s) to review: The number of patients waiting for a first hearing aid review following fitting. The number of patients waiting at the census date corresponds to the time that has elapsed from the date of fitting. This final stage is not subject to the 18 Weeks RTT target.

Completed wait from fitting of hearing aid(s) to review: The waiting time experienced by patients for a first hearing aid review following fitting. The number of patients who received a first hearing aid review during the quarter corresponds to the length of time that elapsed from the date of fitting.

One-stop clinic: A service provided by some NHS Boards whereby the patient will receive a specialist consultation and, where appropriate, undergo treatment at the same visit.

Median: This is a measure of the typical (average) waiting time. The median is also known as the 50th percentile and signifies that 50% of patients waited up to the time shown; 50% waited longer.

As Audiology data is collected in single week groupings, the median is similarly represented in weeks. E.g. a median wait of 3 weeks represents a grouping of 21 – 27 days.

90th percentile: The 90th percentile wait indicates the maximum time 9 out of every 10 patients waited. 90% of patients waited up to the time shown; 10% waited longer.

As Audiology data is collected in single week groupings, the 90th percentile is similarly represented in weeks. E.g. a 90th percentile wait of 3 weeks represents a grouping of 21 – 27 days.

List of Tables

Table No.	Name	Time period	File & size
1	Completed Waits	December 2012 - December 2013	Excel [2030kb]
2	Ongoing Waits	December 2012 – December 2013	Excel [2027kb]

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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 maximum waiting time for the whole patient journey from referral to treatment is 18 weeks from 31 December 2011. Audiology waiting times are an important component in the delivery of the 18 weeks Referral to Treatment (18 Weeks RTT) standard. The 18 weeks Referral to Treatment standard is part of a variety of targets and standards set by the Scottish Government around waiting times. Details on each of the targets/standards that ISD publish are available within the [Supporting Documentation](#) web pages. Further details on all targets and standards are available on the Scottish Government [Scotland Performs](#) website.

NHS Boards are working with Scottish Government and ISD to update systems in order to improve information capture to support the measuring and reporting of the whole patient journey from referral to treatment. Some caution should be taken in using and interpreting these data at this developmental stage.

While systems are implemented, a pragmatic, interim solution has been to measure and report the best available information about the different 'stages' of the journey for Audiology patients. The Audiology assessment (first contact) appointment, assessment to fitting of hearing aid(s), assessment to treatment (excluding fitting of hearing aids) stages of the journey are an indicator of progress towards the 18 Weeks RTT standard. NHS Boards submit to ISD the number of patients who are waiting at month end census and the number of patients seen who experienced a waiting time during the quarter for the stages.

As NHS Boards continue to manage their patients along an 18 Weeks RTT pathway, several NHS Boards have introduced 'one-stop' clinics, where patients can be assessed and treated in a single appointment. NHS Boards are measuring one-stop patients against an 18 Weeks RTT pathway. Information relating to Audiology patients on an 18 Weeks RTT pathway should be included as part of the overall 18 Weeks RTT data submission to ISD.

From January 2011, NHS Boards have the option to record 'one-stop' patients in their audiology data submission to ISD. For the quarter ending 30 September 2013, some NHS Boards have submitted waiting times information for one-stop clinics for Audiology patients. Further details are shown in the [One-stop clinic table](#).

ISD receives aggregate Audiology data from each NHS Board and so patient-level information is not systematically validated by ISD, however, ISD does carry out quality assurance checks on the data submitted. The derivation of the figures and data accuracy is carried out by individual NHS Boards in collaboration with ISD.

Data collection and methods

Data is collected via a standard template that is submitted monthly by each Health Board. This standard template is populated, checked, verified and signed off by an authorised NHS Board colleague before being submitted to ISD.

After submission to ISD the data is entered into the ISD Audiology database. The data is then extracted from the database to produce Monthly Management Information Reports for the Health boards who can then check the data for accuracy. ISD look for unusual changes or patterns in the data which might indicate a data quality issue, any potential anomalies are raised with the Health Board in order to verify the accuracy of the data or correct any problems.

The quarterly Audiology publication tables and charts are also produced using the data from the ISD Audiology database. Again the tables and charts produced are checked by ISD and NHS Boards are contacted and asked to clarify any anomalies in order to ensure the quality of the data. ISD keep a record of any data quality issues which are then published in the data quality section of the publication report.

ISD are investigating ways in which Audiology data submission can be made more streamlined and efficient, including the proposed introduction of Audiology data into the Waiting Times data warehouse. Further information on data quality can be found in the [Data Quality](#) section.

A2 – Data Quality

Audiology data has been collected nationally since April 2007 and there have been significant improvements in data quality which is reflected in the completeness and quality of the data over time. A monthly Data Quality Status report is produced, in which ISD records the timeliness of the NHS Boards submissions, any missing data and any quality issues. ISD then raises any queries about the quality of the data submitted, boards respond to these queries in order to verify that the submitted figures are correct. Outstanding data quality issues are described below.

General data quality issues

NHS Ayrshire & Arran

Data for March 2011 did not contain information on completed waits; this could affect the Scotland total for completed waits during this time period. Paediatric and Adult data was combined together until June 2011. In November 2012 data for Paediatric patients waiting was unavailable; this could have a small affect on the Scotland total for patients waiting during this time period.

NHS Fife

From March 2011 all adult patients are triaged and reported as being seen at a one-stop service.

NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde

Data from Clyde sites was not available from July 2010 to July 2011. Caution should be used when comparing data from this time period because the number of patients seen and waiting will be different than if all data was included. Also, a change in recording practice resulted in an increase in the number of patients recorded as seen from November 2011. This change means that the data collection is now much more robust and covers all referrals to the Audiology service. However, caution should be taken when making comparisons with data from before this change. This is because a small amount of the differences seen could be due to better recording practices rather than being an indicator of performance.

Due to system limitations Paediatric patients seen at the Royal Hospital for Sick Children (Yorkhill) for Audiology Assessment (first contact) are only reported if the patient is referred for fitting of hearing aid(s). NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde are working to resolve this issue.

NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde have updated previously published figures for the quarter ending 30 September 2013, this affects a very small number of records.

NHS Highland

Paediatric patients are given an immediate appointment for assessment to fitting of hearing aid(s) and as such may be reported as seen but not waiting.

NHS Highland have reported a data quality issue with some Adult patients waiting for fitting of hearing aid not being recorded properly, estimating that this affects approximately 50 records in each month. NHS Highland have explained that this issue is due to problems in coding and entering data, this is being resolved locally by retraining Audiology staff.

NHS Lanarkshire

Due to a problem with IT systems, there are data quality issues with figures for patients waiting and seen for fitting of hearing aids, Other treatment (excluding fitting of hearing aids) and review appointments. NHS Lanarkshire have an action plan in place to address this particular issue. The results of this will not filter through to the reports until the first quarter of 2014. Please note that this affects the Scotland figures. Information on patients waiting and seen for an Audiology assessment (first contact) are accurate.

One-stop clinic table

The option to record 'one-stop' patients separately was introduced in January 2011 and the number of patients seen does not yet accurately reflect the actual number of patients who receive a one-stop service.

It should be noted that if a NHS Board opts not to separate out 'one-stop' patients and instead includes them in section 'patients waiting for a first contact appointment' there is a risk that a patient may appear to be in breach of their waiting time. For example:

If a patient is booked to attend a one-stop clinic at week 15 but is not recorded as waiting for a one-stop clinic they may appear as a 12 week breach in the published stage of treatment target.

To address this NHS Boards must either

- manage 'one-stop' waiting times within 12 weeks stage of treatment target; or
- record 'one-stop' patients separately.

The different recording practices for one-stop clinics is summarised in the following table.

Board	Audiology Table in which one-stop data is recorded		
	One-stop clinic (completed wait)	One-stop clinic (ongoing wait)	Audiology Stage of treatment tables
Ayrshire & Arran			2a (actual wait) & 3a/4a (zero wait), 2b (ongoing wait)
Borders	✓	✓	
Fife	✓	✓	
Forth Valley	✓	✓	Paediatric data recorded within the other Stage of Treatment tables
Grampian			2a (actual wait) & 3a/4a (zero wait), 2b (ongoing wait)
Greater Glasgow & Clyde			2a (actual wait) & 3a/4a (zero wait), 2b (ongoing wait)
Highland	✓		2b (ongoing wait)
Lothian	✓		2b (ongoing wait)
Orkney			2a (actual wait) & 3a/4a (zero wait), 2b (ongoing wait)
Shetland			2a (actual wait) & 3a/4a (zero wait), 2b (ongoing wait)
Tayside	✓	✓	

Note: NHS Dumfries & Galloway, Lanarkshire and Western Isles do not provide a one-stop service.

A3 – Publication Metadata (including revisions details)

Metadata Indicator	Description
Publication title	Audiology Waiting Times
Description	Monthly and quarterly summary of Audiology waiting times and waiting lists.
Theme	Health and Social Care
Topic	Access and Waiting Times
Format	Excel Workbooks
Data source(s)	Aggregate counts accredited and derived from individual NHS Scotland Boards are submitted monthly to ISD using a defined excel template. Associated with individual NHS Scotland Boards Local Delivery Plans integrated to the 18 Weeks RTT national standards.
Date that data are acquired	Deadline for data submission is the 23 rd of each month, though files can be resubmitted up to 1 week before publication where the quality assurance process identifies differences with local figures.
Release date	The last Tuesday of the month for each publication.
Frequency	Quarterly.
Timeframe of data and timeliness	Data from July 2009 to date. There have been no delays in reporting.
Continuity of data	Information relating to Audiology waiting times in NHS Boards has been collected nationally since April 2007 with a revised dataset introduced in December 2008.
Revisions statement	Historic data is not normally revised unless revision of data is required due to NHS Board resubmission of local data following publication. If data is revised, details of the revisions will be stated in the relevant publication. Further information on historical revisions can be found at http://www.isdscotland.org/Health-Topics/Waiting-Times/Audiology/ .
Revisions relevant to this publication	NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde have updated previously published figures for the quarter ending 30 September 2013, this affects a very small number of records.
Concepts and definitions	Definitions not contained in this report are available at: http://www.isdscotland.org/Products-and-Services/Data-Definitions-and-References/
Relevance and key uses of the statistics	Waiting times are important to patients and are a measure of how the NHS is responding to demands for services.

	<p>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 this data include information requests for a variety of customers, e.g. research charities; public companies; freedom of information requests; information support to Boards; health intelligence work; parliamentary questions and HEAT targets.</p>
Accuracy	<p>These data are classified as developmental. ISD only receives aggregate data from each NHS Board where the data for the previous quarter are confirmed by the submitting Board. ISD compares the reported data to previous figures and to expected trends. Derivation of the figures and data accuracy is a matter for individual NHS Boards.</p>
Completeness	<p>100% of submitted data is used for analysis and publication.</p>
Comparability	<p>This Audiology waiting times publication is not comparable with other UK administrations due to definitional differences. The main difference being the different waiting times targets throughout the UK. NHS England produces Statistics on Direct Access Audiology which can be found at the following link: http://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/statistical-work-areas/direct-access-audiology/.</p> <p>NHS Wales produce statistics on Referral to Treatment which can be found at the following link: http://wales.gov.uk/statistics-and-research/referral-to-treatment-times/?lang=en. However please be aware that these figures are not directly comparable with NHS Scotland figures due to differences in targets.</p> <p>Waiting times statistics from NHS Northern Ireland can be found at the following link: http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/stats_research/hospital-stats/waiting_times_main/stats-waiting-times.htm.</p>
Accessibility	<p>It is the policy of ISD Scotland to make its web sites and products accessible according to published guidelines.</p>
Coherence and clarity	<p>Key statistics for the latest quarter are linked to on the main waiting times page http://www.isdscotland.org/Health-Topics/Waiting-Times/.</p> <p>Statistics are presented within Excel spreadsheets. NHS Board and national figures are presented. Further features to aid clarity:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Attendances and performance data by Adult and Paediatric patients are available in separate tables to

	enable users to select a single measure for analysis. 2. Tables are printer friendly. 3. Key data presented graphically.
Value type and unit of measurement	Number and percentage of patients seen, number and percentage of patients waiting; by NHS Board and by patient type (adult, paediatric).
Disclosure	The ISD protocol on Statistical Disclosure Protocol is followed.
Official Statistics designation	Official statistics
UK Statistics Authority Assessment	Awaiting assessment by UK Statistics Authority.
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Help email	nss.isdAudiology@nhs.net
Date form completed	10 February 2014

A4 – 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)

A5 – 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](#).