Chronic Pain Waiting Times in NHSScotland
Quarter ending 30 September 2017

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A Non-Official Statistics Publication for Scotland

About this release

Information Services Division (ISD) publishes information quarterly on the length of time new patients waited for a first appointment at NHS chronic pain and pain psychology clinics. The information is shown by NHS Board for quarter ending 30 September 2017. These data are considered developmental and should be used with caution, as there are data quality issues and incomplete data from Pain Psychology Clinics.

ISD recently sought users views on this release and detailed findings can be found in the report. We will be implementing changes over forthcoming publications and continue to welcome your feedback on this release.

Main Points

Pain Clinics

Twelve out of fourteen NHS Boards offer pain clinics to patients and provide data to ISD on how long patients wait to attend their first appointment based on the 18 weeks referral to treatment (RTT) Standard.

- Between 1 July to 30 September 2017, there were 4,741 new patients referred to a pain clinic. This compares with 4,724 referrals in the previous quarter.
- Of the 2,751 patients who attended for their first appointment between 1 July and 30 September 2017, 1,840 (66.9%) attended within 18 weeks, a decrease compared with 72.2 % during the previous three months.
- Of the 4,203 who were still waiting for their first appointment at 30 September 2017, 630 (15.0%) have been waiting for more than 18 weeks.
- Seven NHS Boards saw nine out of ten patients within 18 weeks, including NHS Lanarkshire, NHS Orkney & NHS Shetland who saw all their patients within 18 weeks. The remaining five NHS Boards did not meet the 18 wks RTT standard.
- 1,318 patients were removed from a waiting list for reasons other than being seen. Of these, 400 (12.5%) patients did not attend their first appointment and did not notify the hospital.
Length of time patients waited from referral to 1st appointment at a Chronic Pain Clinic for quarter ending September 2017

Pain Psychology Clinics

Due to the developmental nature these data should be interpreted with caution. Ten NHS Boards provide Pain Psychology Clinics, but only six can provide data.

- There were 402 new patients referred to pain psychology clinics between 1 July and 30 September 2017.
- Of the 253 patients who attended for their first appointment in this quarter, 161 (63.6%) were seen within 18 weeks.
- Of the 395 who were still waiting for their first appointment as at 30 September 2017, 107 (27.1%) have been waiting for more than 18 weeks.
- 155 patients were removed from a waiting list for reasons other than being seen. Of these, 43 (11.8%) patients did not attend their 1st appointment and did not notify the hospital.

All data relating to Chronic Pain Waiting Times is available in a spreadsheet.

Background

Waiting times for chronic pain services are monitored as part of the 18 weeks RTT standard. Pain services are part of a centralised service (usually with consultant led outpatient appointments) to which an individual is referred to a clinic for chronic pain assessment and management. The pain psychology service is provided for pain management led by psychological therapy specialists. The data presented here has been adjusted for periods of patient unavailability. Some referrals will not be accepted as the request to a healthcare professional or to an organisation to provide healthcare to a patient may not be appropriate. Data on return patients is not available as only two NHS Boards have a process in place to capture this information on their IT Systems. These data are not provided to ISD.
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Further Information

The data from this publication is available to download from our web page. A metadata document has been produced for this publication.

For more information see the Waiting Times section of our website.

ISD are seeking users feedback on the content and frequency of this publication. You can provide your view here.

The next release of this publication will be in March 2018.

ISD and 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. Further information about our statistics.