About this release

This release by Information Services Division gives a quarterly update on how long patients wait for Musculoskeletal (MSK) services that are delivered by Allied Health Professionals (AHP) in Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy, Chiropody/Podiatry and Orthotics. These data are considered developmental and progress continues to be made with all NHS Boards who are developing their IT systems in order to provide data for all indicators. The figures for referrals and patients seen include the Musculoskeletal Advice and Triage Service (MATS) operated by NHS 24 for patients referred to self-management. These are at ‘All AHP MSK Specialties’ level only, as the MSK specialty cannot be determined in the data submitted by NHS24.

Main Points

• 43.9% of the 83,089 patients who had a first clinical outpatient appointment with an AHP MSK service were seen within 4 weeks of referral for quarter ending 30 September 2019, compared with the national target of 90%. Note that data for MSK Occupational Therapy are available for 7 NHS Boards only. The remaining Boards were unable to separate figures for MSK patients and non-MSK patients.

Percentage of patients seen within 4 Weeks for quarter ending September 2019
There were 115,505 referrals to AHP MSK services participating in this national data collection in this quarter.

At 30 September 2019, 37.7% of the 77,126 patients waiting for a first clinical appointment with an AHP MSK service had been waiting 4 weeks or less.

Background

MSK problems include a diversity of complaints and diseases localised in joints, bones, cartilage, ligaments, tendons, tendon sheaths, bursa and muscles. The episodes covered by this publication also include patients seen pre or post orthopaedic surgery and those with peripheral nerve lesions (e.g. carpal tunnel, sciatica) or complication of fracture/dislocation/trauma.

The Scottish Government has determined that at least 90% of AHP MSK patients should wait no longer than 4 weeks from receipt of referral from a patient or health or social care professional. See NHSScotland Waiting Times Guidance for more information. The guidance target should be met by each profession individually within each NHS Board.

AHP MSK Occupational Therapy is provided within the overall Occupational Therapy Service in seven of the 14 NHS Boards and it is not possible to separately identify only the MSK cases.

To inform this release 11 Boards provided information through the national data collection, while three boards (NHS Fife, NHS Forth Valley and NHS Tayside) provided data through a combination of the national data collection system and local figures. Further information regarding NHS boards submitting data is available.

Please see News and Updates section of our website for more details.

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Further Information

Find out more in the full report. The data from this publication is available to download from our web page along with a metadata document and the NHSScotland Open Data platform.

For more information on AHP MSK see the waiting times section of our website. For related topics, please see the waiting times information page.

ISD have developed a video, with further explanations of how waiting times are calculated.

The next release of this publication will be 17 March 2020.

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.