Psychological Therapies Waiting Times in NHSScotland

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About this release
This release by Information Services Division (ISD) provides an update on how long people waited to start treatment for Psychological Therapies provided by NHSScotland, for the quarter ending December 2019.

Main Points
For the quarter ending December 2019:

- 17,160 people started treatment for Psychological Therapies in 14 NHS Boards and NHS 24. This compares with 17,711 for the previous quarter and 16,742 for the quarter ending December 2018. Half of the people started their treatment within 5 weeks.

- Nearly eight out of ten patients (79.0%) started their treatment within 18 weeks, compared to 79.4% for the previous quarter and 78% for the quarter ending December 2018. The Scottish Government standard says that 90% of people should start their treatment within 18 weeks of referral to Psychological Therapies.

- 1,054 people aged 65+ started treatment for Psychological Therapies in this quarter, 89.9% started their treatment within 18 weeks, which compares to 90.0% in the previous quarter.

- 38,599 people were referred to Psychological Therapies in Scotland which is a 2.3% decrease from the previous quarter (39,493) and an 8.1% decrease from the same quarter ending December 2018 (42,023).
**Background**

Waiting times information for Psychological Therapies is still being developed. NHS Boards are working with ISD and the Scottish Government to improve the consistency and completeness of the information. The Scottish Government has set a standard for the NHS in Scotland to deliver a maximum wait of 18 weeks from a patient’s referral to treatment for Psychological Therapies from December 2014. The standard should be delivered for at least 90% of patients.

Psychological Therapies refer to a range of interventions, based on psychological concepts and theory, which are designed to help people understand and make changes to their thinking, behaviour and relationships in order to relieve distress and to improve functioning. The standard applies specifically to Psychological Therapies for treatment of a mental illness or disorder.

Scottish Government asked Healthcare Improvement Scotland to lead a programme of work to improve access to Psychological Therapies. ISD are a partner in this programme of work providing data, analytical and intelligence support working closely with NHS Boards.

Please see the Psychological Therapies Report for more information on the data quality.

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**Further Information**

The latest report and data tables are available on the publication web page. Background and further information is available from our web page.

MHAIST information can be found on the MHAIST webpage on the ISD website.

The Psychology Workforce Planning Project was initiated in 2001 and is a collaboration between NHS Education for Scotland (NES) and ISD.

For related topics, please see either the Waiting Times or MHAIST pages.

The next release of this publication will be June 2020.

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