About this release

This release by Public Health Scotland reports on completed patient pathways covered by the 18 weeks Referral to Treatment (RTT) Standard (90% of patients being treated within 18 weeks of referral) up to 30th June 2020.

The data presented in this release has been impacted in part by the COVID-19 (Coronavirus) outbreak. In particular, on 17 March NHSScotland was placed under emergency footing by the Cabinet Secretary, NHS Boards were asked to suspend all non-urgent elective treatment. Later, on 23rd March the nation entered a period of ‘lockdown’. This has affected normal referral and treatment patterns since then. As Scotland moved into Phase 2 of the ‘lockdown’, from the 19 June, Boards started to resume some services as part of the planned remobilisation of services. Where possible we have highlighted aspects of the statistics that are influenced by these factors.

Please note, all Boards have endured significant pressure on local resource and planning as the response to the pandemic evolves. As a result, the data submitted for recent months may have not been subjected to the usual levels of quality assurance. In addition, NHS Grampian have been unable to submit data from March 2020 onwards. Please therefore interpret the latest statistics with caution.

Main Points

• In June 2020, a total of 45,166 patient journeys eligible under the 18 weeks RTT Standard were identified by NHS Boards in Scotland. The waiting time could be fully measured for 84.5% of these patient journeys. This compares to 89.5% in February 2020 and is representative of a sustained drop-off in this measure since April.

• Of the fully measurable patient journeys which were completed in June 2020, 77.8% of patients across Scotland were reported as being treated within 18 weeks of referral. The figures for April and May were 81.2% and 80.7% respectively. Given the impact of the COVID-19 response on the volume of patients seen, caution should be taken when comparing these percentages with previous statistics.

• Including those patient journeys that cannot be measured against the standard, there has been a substantial reduction in the overall number of eligible 18 weeks RTT waits reported from March onwards; dropping to a low of 27,900 in April before gradually increasing to 45,166 in June. The comparable figure for February was 94,481 (excluding NHS Grampian). The chart below shows the long term trend.
Background

The 18 Weeks RTT standard applies to the entire patient journey from the initial referral to the start of treatment. Achieving the standard depends on waiting times for Diagnostic tests, New Outpatient appointments, Inpatient and Day Case treatment. 18 Week RTT performance is based on adjusted waits for consultant led treatments and fully measurable completed patient journeys. PHS produces separate publications with information about waiting times for Diagnostic tests, New Outpatient appointments, Inpatient and Day Case treatment, these can be found on the waiting times page of our website.

Documents relating to waiting times, including the Treatment Time Guarantee are:

- The Patient Rights (Scotland) Act 2011.
- The Regulations and Directions under the Act - CEL 17 (2012).
- The Regulations (Amended) under the Act - Amendment Regulations (2014)

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Further Information

Data from this publication are available from the publication page on our website.

The next release of this publication will be 24 November 2020.

NHS Performs

A selection of information from this publication is included in NHS Performs. NHS Performs is a website that brings together a range of information on how hospitals and NHS Boards within NHSScotland are performing.

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PHS and Official Statistics

Public Health Scotland (PHS) is the principal and authoritative source of statistics on health and care services in Scotland. PHS 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 Statistics. Further information about our statistics.