

STATISTICAL PRESS NOTICE

NHS DIAGNOSTICS WAITING TIMES QUARTERLY CENSUS DECEMBER 2016

Diagnostic Census – December 2016

Data are published from this latest quarterly diagnostic census of all diagnostic tests, for period ending December 2016. The key points are:

- There were 11,300 waits of 6 weeks or over for tests not captured in the December monthly return. This is a decrease of 600 since the September 2016 census.
- Of the over 6 week waits identified in the census the major areas are Pathology (2,900), Cardiology (2,700) and Imaging (2,100)
- Kettering General Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust failed to submit data for the census this quarter.
- Tables 1 and 2 shows latest figures for quarter ending December 2016.

Detailed tables by provider can be found via the following link:

<http://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/diagnostics-waiting-times-and-activity/diagnostics-census-data/>

Annex A – Detailed Tables

Table 1 – Diagnostic waits of 6 weeks or longer by area – Quarter ending December 2016

Diagnostic Area	6<13 Weeks	13+ Weeks	Total 6+ Weeks
Audiology	434	50	484
Cardiology	3,745	688	4,433
Endoscopy	5,183	1,431	6,614
GI Physiology	324	194	518
Imaging	6,637	986	7,623
Neurophysiology	646	234	880
Ophthalmic Science	210	38	248
Pathology	1,992	883	2,875
Respiratory Physiology	599	167	766
Urodynamics	350	56	406
Vascular Technology	321	148	469
Total Area	20,441	4,875	25,316

Note: Figures include data from the December 2016 monthly diagnostic return (DM01)

Table 2 – Diagnostic waits of 6 weeks or longer not captured in December 2016 monthly diagnostic return (DM01)

Diagnostic Area	6<13 Weeks	13+ Weeks	Total 6+ Weeks
Cardiology	2,134	594	2,728
Endoscopy	768	257	1,025
GI Physiology	324	194	518
Imaging	1,421	711	2,132
Neurophysiology	499	225	724
Ophthalmic Science	210	38	248
Pathology	1,992	883	2,875
Respiratory Physiology	438	137	575
Vascular Technology	321	148	469
All Areas	8,107	3,187	11,294

Statistical Notes

1. Diagnostic waiting times

Diagnostics data is collected from NHS providers (NHS Trusts and other providers).

The data measures the number of patients waiting 6 weeks or longer at the end of the quarter. This information is split by number of waiting between 6 and 12 weeks, those waiting 13 weeks or longer, and by test.

The waiting times reported are for those patients who have been referred for a test, but whose test had not taken place by the end of the reporting period.

Data was first published in March 2007, and is available for each quarter from August 2006 to date.

The six week diagnostic wait was initially introduced as a 'milestone' from March 2008 towards achieving the standard Referral to Treatment wait of 18 weeks by December 2008, but diagnostics waiting times now form part of the NHS Constitution. This gives patients the legal right to treatment within 18 weeks of referral (18 week RTT) and as part of this, pledges that patients should not be required to wait 6 weeks or longer for a diagnostic test.

NHS England's planning guidance states that there is a threshold of 99% for this pledge. The financial penalty for non-delivery of the standard is set out in the NHS Standard Contract 2016/17.

2. Interpretation of waiting times data

Care should be taken when making month on month comparisons of these figures. Measures of waiting time performance are subject to seasonality. For example, the presence of bank holidays, or the number of weekends, in a calendar month affect the number of working days. Similarly, adverse weather may result in emergency pressure and impacts upon the health service's ability to preserve elective capacity. These factors can affect waiting times and should be considered when making comparisons across time.

3. Feedback welcomed

We welcome feedback on the content and presentation of statistics within this Statistical Press Notice and those published on the NHS England website. If anyone has any comments on this, or any other issues regarding these statistics, then please email unify2@dh.gsi.gov.uk

Additional Information

Full details of diagnostics data for individual organisations is available at: <http://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/statistical-work-areas/diagnostics-waiting-times-and-activity/>

For press enquiries please contact the NHS England media team on 0113 825 0958 or 0113 825 0959. Email enquiries should be directed to nhsengland.media@nhs.net

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