

STATISTICAL PRESS NOTICE

NHS DIAGNOSTICS WAITING TIMES QUARTERLY CENSUS MARCH 2017

Diagnostic Census – March 2017

Data are published from this latest quarterly diagnostic census of all diagnostic tests, for period ending March 2017. The key points are:

- There were 12,200 waits of 6 weeks or over for tests not captured in the March monthly return. This is an increase of 900 since the December 2016 census.
- Of the over 6 week waits identified in the census the major areas are Cardiology (3,400), Pathology (3,400) and Imaging (1,900)
- Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust failed to submit data for the census this quarter.
- Tables 1 and 2 shows latest figures for quarter ending March 2017.

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 March 2017

Diagnostic Area	6<13 Weeks	13+ Weeks	Total 6+ Weeks
Audiology	517	25	542
Cardiology	3,894	1,233	5,127
Endoscopy	3,507	807	4,314
GI Physiology	357	165	522
Imaging	4,723	874	5,597
Neurophysiology	535	180	715
Ophthalmic Science	194	36	230
Pathology	2,185	1,213	3,398
Respiratory Physiology	541	221	762
Urodynamics	356	62	418
Vascular Technology	269	87	356
Total Area	17,078	4,903	21,981

Note: Figures include data from the March 2017 monthly diagnostic return (DM01)

Table 2 – Diagnostic waits of 6 weeks or longer not captured in March 2017 monthly diagnostic return (DM01)

Diagnostic Area	6<13 Weeks	13+ Weeks	Total 6+ Weeks
Cardiology	2,296	1,146	3,442
Endoscopy	756	377	1,133
GI Physiology	357	165	522
Imaging	1,333	597	1,930
Neurophysiology	392	175	567
Ophthalmic Science	194	36	230
Pathology	2,185	1,213	3,398
Respiratory Physiology	377	206	583
Vascular Technology	269	87	356
All Areas	8,159	4,002	12,161

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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