

## STATISTICAL PRESS NOTICE

### NHS DIAGNOSTICS WAITING TIMES QUARTERLY CENSUS DECEMBER 2017

#### Diagnostic Census – DECEMBER 2017

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

- There were 15,500 waits of 6 weeks or over for tests not captured in the December monthly return. This is an increase of 2,500 since the September 2017 census.
- Of the over 6 week waits identified in the census the major areas are Cardiology (4,300), Pathology (4,000) and Imaging (2,600).
- Mid Essex Hospital Services NHS Trust & East and North Hertfordshire NHS Trust failed to submit data for the census this quarter.
- Bradford Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust submitted a partial return that only included Audiology data.
- Tables 1 and 2 shows latest figures for quarter ending December 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 December 2017**

<b>Diagnostic Area</b>	<b>6&lt;13 Weeks</b>	<b>13+ Weeks</b>	<b>Total 6+ Weeks</b>
Audiology	1,439	249	1,688
Cardiology	5,119	1,197	6,316
Endoscopy	5,670	1,874	7,544
GI Physiology	353	492	845
Imaging	9,796	1,177	10,973
Neurophysiology	812	227	1,039
Ophthalmic Science	359	239	598
Pathology	3,424	565	3,989
Respiratory Physiology	1,014	547	1,561
Urodynamics	307	53	360
Vascular Technology	174	22	196
<b>Total Area</b>	<b>28,467</b>	<b>6,642</b>	<b>35,109</b>

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

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

<b>Diagnostic Area</b>	<b>6&lt;13 Weeks</b>	<b>13+ Weeks</b>	<b>Total 6+ Weeks</b>
Cardiology	3,248	1,028	4,276
Endoscopy	901	464	1,365
GI Physiology	353	492	845
Imaging	1,786	778	2,564
Neurophysiology	480	218	698
Ophthalmic Science	359	239	598
Pathology	3,424	565	3,989
Respiratory Physiology	572	433	1,005
Vascular Technology	174	22	196
<b>All Areas</b>	<b>11,297</b>	<b>4,239</b>	<b>15,536</b>

## **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 6 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 2017/18.

### **2. Interpretation of waiting times data**

Care should be taken when making month on month and quarter on quarter 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.qsi.gov.uk](mailto:unify2@dh.qsi.gov.uk)

### **4. Consultation**

The future of the Quarterly Diagnostics Census and Monthly Diagnostics Waiting Times and Activity Returns are under consultation. Find out more at: <https://www.engage.england.nhs.uk/consultation/diagnostics-census-waiting-times-activity-return>

## **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](mailto:nhsengland.media@nhs.net)

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