Method for estimating elective deferrals in January 2018

Deferrals were estimated using data from the Secondary Uses Service for January 2017 and January 2018.

The figures relate to elective admissions occurring in the two months, where:

- The admission was to a 'specific acute' treatment function. This excludes admissions for maternities, well babies, mental health and learning disabilities. This was done so that the number corresponds as closely as possible to activity covered by the 18-week referral-to-treatment standard.

- The activity was carried out by an NHS provider, as that was the audience for the guidance issued by the National Emergency Pressures Panel. This excludes activity carried out by the independent sector and providers outside England.

Account was taken of data quality issues affecting the information supplied by particular providers, to ensure the comparison was on a like-for-like basis.

For the baseline, we used the period 2nd January to 1st February 2017 so that we had the same number of Mondays, Tuesdays, etc. as in January 2018. Activity levels vary considerably across the week, so this provides a more like-for-like comparison.

Deferrals were calculated separately for day case and ordinary elective admissions:

- For day cases, deferrals were calculated as the difference between the January 2018 total and the January 2017 baseline.

- For ordinary elective admissions, a different approach was taken to account for unfinished spells (which are not contained in the SUS data set). This involved the following steps:

  1. The SUS data extract was limited to spells with lengths of stay of <7 days.
  2. A figure for the total number of <7-day length of stay ordinary elective spells was generated for January 2018 by adding together:
     - The actual number of <7-day length of stay ordinary elective spells in the period 1st to 24th of January; and
     - A figure for the period from 25th to 31st January that was derived by extrapolating forward admissions for the prior seven days (i.e. the 18th to 24th January).
  3. A figure for deferred <7-day length of stay ordinary elective spells was then calculated by comparing (2) to the January 2017 baseline from (1).
  4. The final step was to derive a figure for deferred 7+ day length of stay spells by grossing up (3) by 14.0%. This grossing factor was based on the percentage (p) of ordinary admissions in 2017/18 year-to-date that involved a 7+ day length of stay; and calculated as 1/(1-p).

The numbers are given in the table below:

	Jan-17 baseline	Jan-18 admissions	Net difference	Est. Total deferrals
Total day cases	582,025	574,755	-7,270	-7,270
Total ordinary elective admissions (< 7 Day LoS Spells)	99,064	65,052^a + 20,327^b	-13,631	-15,544
Total ordinary elective admissions (7+ Day LoS Spells)			-1,913^c	
Total elective spells				**-22,814**

(a) Total for the period 1st to 24th January

(b) Estimate for the period 25th January to 31st January based on extrapolating forward totals for the 18th to 24th January.

(c) Estimate base on <7 day length of stay ordinary admissions accounting for 87.7% of all ordinary admissions based on M10 YTD figures.