

STATISTICAL PRESS NOTICE

NHS DIAGNOSTICS WAITING TIMES QUARTERLY CENSUS MARCH 2018

Diagnostic Census – MARCH 2018

Data are published from this latest quarterly diagnostic census of all diagnostic tests, for period ending March 2018. The key points are:

- There were 18,900 waits of 6 weeks or over for tests not captured in the March monthly return. This is an increase of 3,400 since the December 2017 census.
- Of the over 6 week waits identified in the census the major areas are Pathology (4,900), Imaging (4,400) and Cardiology (3,800).
- Royal Liverpool and Broadgreen University Hospitals NHS Trust failed to submit data for the census this quarter.
- Bradford Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust submitted a partial return that excluded Peripheral Neurophysiology, Colonoscopy, Flexi Sigmoidoscopy and Gastroscopy data.
- University College London Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust submitted a return that included unvalidated data for Imaging tests.
- Tables 1 and 2 shows latest figures for quarter ending March 2018.

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 2018

Diagnostic Area	6<13 Weeks	13+ Weeks	Total 6+ Weeks
Audiology	834	139	973
Cardiology	4,647	1,396	6,043
Endoscopy	5,609	1,362	6,971
GI Physiology	538	560	1,098
Imaging	12,218	1,949	14,167
Neurophysiology	949	369	1,318
Ophthalmic Science	373	170	543
Pathology	4,187	722	4,909
Respiratory Physiology	1,551	591	2,142
Urodynamics	304	45	349
Vascular Technology	226	44	270
Total Area	31,436	7,347	38,783

Note: Figures include data from the March 2018 monthly diagnostic return (DM01)

Table 2 – Diagnostic waits of 6 weeks or longer not captured in March 2018 monthly diagnostic return (DM01)

Diagnostic Area	6<13 Weeks	13+ Weeks	Total 6+ Weeks
Cardiology	2,546	1,270	3,816
Endoscopy	840	448	1,288
GI Physiology	538	560	1,098
Imaging	3,263	1,180	4,443
Neurophysiology	588	279	867
Ophthalmic Science	373	170	543
Pathology	4,187	722	4,909
Respiratory Physiology	1,157	494	1,651
Vascular Technology	226	44	270
All Areas	13,718	5,167	18,885

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 england.nhsdata@nhs.net

4. Consultation

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>

The consultation closed on 5th April 2018. NHS England will publish a response to the feedback received as part of this consultation once results have been analysed and next steps identified. In the meantime, the Q1 2018/19 collection of the

Diagnostics Census will be suspended and providers will not be required to submit data at this stage.

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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