

Publication of Cancer Waiting Times data – August data to be published on 10 October 2019

Introduction and background

Following a request from the Prime Minister in 2018, Professor Stephen Powis, NHS Medical Director, was asked to carry out a clinical review of standards across the NHS, with the aim of determining whether patients would be well served by updating and supplementing some of the older targets in use. His interim report was published in March 2019 and set out the initial proposals for testing changes to access standards in mental health services, cancer care, elective care and urgent and emergency care.

This interim report can be found here:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/clinical-review-nhs-access-standards/>

For cancer, as recommended by the independent cancer taskforce chaired by Sir Harpal Kumar, the then head of Cancer Research UK, the Powis report recommended the testing of the 28 day faster diagnosis standard to replace the urgent two week wait for suspected cancer, and breast symptomatic where cancer is not initially suspected to understand their impact on clinical care, patient experience and the management of services.

The following hospital trusts have worked with the NHS nationally to agree how they will safely test the proposed new standard for cancer diagnosis, and began the first phase of the trial from late August:

- Mid Essex Hospital Services
- Epsom and St Helier University Hospitals
- Kingston Hospital
- Chesterfield Royal Hospital
- Northampton General Hospital
- Doncaster and Bassetlaw Teaching Hospitals
- East Lancashire Hospitals
- Warrington and Halton Hospitals
- Hampshire Hospitals
- The Royal Bournemouth and Christchurch Hospitals
- Torbay and South Devon

These trusts will be testing the use of a faster diagnosis standard for people with suspected cancer – meaning that people can expect to be told whether or not they have cancer within 28 days of an urgent referral from their GP or a cancer screening programme – instead of the current standard of seeing a specialist within 14 days, which does not include a measurement of when someone should be told the result.

Field testing and impact on published cancer waiting times data

Field testing started in late August. Throughout field testing, two week wait data will continue to be collected and two week wait activity by waiting times bands will continue to be published for each of the CRS providers. However, from the publication of August data on 10 October and throughout the course of field testing, two week wait performance will not be calculated or published for these providers to reflect the change in the performance framework under which the CRS providers are operating. The same approach will apply to

those CCGs for whom a large proportion of two week wait activity is accounted for by the CRS providers. These are:

NHS Blackburn with Darwen CCG
NHS East Lancashire CCG
NHS Halton CCG
NHS Warrington CCG
NHS Bassetlaw CCG
NHS Doncaster CCG
NHS Nene CCG
NHS Mid Essex CCG
NHS Kingston CCG
NHS Richmond CCG
NHS Sutton CCG
NHS North Hampshire CCG
NHS West Hampshire CCG
NHS Surrey Downs CCG

While the performance figures will not be calculated for the CRS providers or affected CCGs, we will continue to calculate and publish performance at regional and England level using all data. Hence the performance of the CRS providers will continue to be included in the headline England position and therefore a fully comparable national time series will continue to be available.

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