



Cancer Waiting Times, October to December 2020 - Provider Based - Provisional

The latest quarterly National Statistics on waiting times for suspected and diagnosed cancer patients accessing NHS services, produced by NHS England and NHS Improvement, were released on 11th February 2021 according to the arrangements approved by the UK Statistics Authority. Quarter Three statistics are on an updated methodology as of July 2020¹.

In 2010, the United Kingdom Statistics Authority assessed and designated these statistics as National Statistics², in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics³.

Waiting Times for Cancer Services - Quarter Three 2020

The key results for outpatient services and first definitive treatments show that, in England, during the period October to December 2020:

Two week Wait:

- 87.5% of people were seen by a specialist within two weeks of an urgent referral for suspected cancer (88.0% in Q2 2020/21)
- 70.4% of people urgently referred for breast symptoms (where cancer was not initially suspected) were seen within two weeks of referral (81.9% in Q2 2020/21)

One month (31-day) wait from diagnosis to first definitive treatment:

¹ The guidance for cancer waiting times is being updated to version 11.0. The National Cancer Waiting Times Monitoring dataset is being updated from version 2.0 to 2.1. These changes are detailed in the published Information standard (DCB0147). These changes are being implemented from July 2020 (that is for July 2020 data published in September), and are expected to be fully implemented across all providers by December 2020 (that is for December 2020 data published in February). The changes will affect the scope and definition of the official statistics on cancer waiting times. Information on the effect of the changes are given in Annex B of the Press Notices for the period of transition from July 2020 to December 2020.

² <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/assessment/assessment-reports/confirmation-of-designation-letters/letter-of-confirmation-as-national-statistics---assessment-report-43.pdf>

³ <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice>

- 95.7% of people treated began first definitive treatment within 31 days of receiving their diagnosis, all cancers (94.8% in Q2 2020/21)
- 97.1% of people treated for breast cancer began first definitive treatment within 31 days of receiving their diagnosis (95.3% in Q2 2020/21)
- 97.5% of people treated for lung cancers began first definitive treatment within 31 days of receiving their diagnosis (97.7% in Q2 2020/21)
- 94.9% of people treated for lower gastrointestinal cancers began first definitive treatment within 31 days of receiving their diagnosis (94.4% in Q2 2020/21)
- 94.7% of people treated for urological cancers began first definitive treatment within 31 days of receiving their diagnosis (90.1% in Q2 2020/21)
- 93.4% of people treated for skin cancers began first definitive treatment within 31 days of receiving their diagnosis (94.2% in Q2 2020/21)

Two month (62-day) wait from urgent referral to first definitive treatment:

- 75.1% of people treated began first definitive treatment within 62 days of being urgently referred for suspected cancer, all cancers (76.8% in Q2 2020/21)
- 84.9% of people treated for breast cancers received first definitive treatment within 62 days of being urgently referred for suspected cancer (85.5% in Q2 2020/21)
- 70.0% of people treated for lung cancers received first definitive treatment within 62 days of being urgently referred for suspected cancer (76.2% in Q2 2020/21)
- 53.7% of people treated for lower gastrointestinal cancers received first definitive treatment within 62 days of being urgently referred for suspected cancer (51.3% in Q2 2020/21)
- 72.5% of people treated for urological cancers (excluding testicular cancer) received first definitive treatment within 62 days of being urgently referred for suspected cancer (68.8% in Q2 2020/21)
- 91.8% of people treated for skin cancers received first definitive treatment within 62 days of being urgently referred for suspected cancer (93.5% in Q2 2020/21)

62-day wait extensions

- 83.1% of patients began first definitive treatment within 62 days of a consultant's decision to upgrade their priority, all cancers (85.3% in Q2 2020/21)
- 85.4% of people began first definitive treatment for cancer within 62 days of referral from an NHS cancer screening service, all cancers (63.9% in Q2 2020/21)

The key results for waiting times for second or subsequent treatment show that, in England, during the period October to December 2020:

31-day wait for subsequent treatment

- 88.9% of people began treatment within 31 days where the subsequent treatment was surgery (87.6% in Q2 2020/21)
- 99.4% of people began treatment within 31 days where the subsequent treatment was an anti-cancer drug regimen (99.2% in Q2 2020/21)
- 97.3% of people began treatment within 31 days where the subsequent treatment was a course of radiotherapy (96.1% in Q2 2020/21)

More analyses are published as part of this statistical release on the NHS website.

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/statistical-work-areas/cancer-waiting-times/>

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