

Publication of Referral to Treatment (RTT) Waiting Times data (Updated 10th June 2021)

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/>

A further progress report was released in October 2019:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/clinically-led-review-of-nhs-access-standards/>

For RTT waiting times the review recommended testing the use of an average (mean) wait measure for people on the waiting list as a potential alternative to a threshold target, currently set at 92% of incomplete pathways being within 18 weeks, to see whether keeping the focus on patients at all stages of their pathway can help to reduce long waits.

The following NHS hospital trusts have worked with the NHS nationally to agree how they will safely test the elective care proposals, and began the first phase of the trial from early August 2019:

- Barts Health
- Calderdale and Huddersfield
- East Lancashire Hospitals
- Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children
- Harrogate and District
- Milton Keynes University Hospital
- Northampton General Hospital
- Surrey and Sussex Healthcare
- Taunton and Somerset
- The Walton Centre
- University Hospitals Bristol
- University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire

The following Independent Sector hospitals began testing the elective care proposals shortly after:

- Fulwood Hall Hospital, Preston
- Euxton Hall Hospital, Chorley
- Ashted Hospital, Leatherhead
- North Downs Hospital, Caterham

As of April 2020, some of the providers taking part in the testing were involved in mergers. From April 2020 onwards, the list of providers involved is:

NHS

- Barts Health NHS Trust
- Calderdale and Huddersfield NHS Foundation Trust

- East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust
- Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children NHS Foundation Trust
- Harrogate and District NHS Foundation Trust
- Milton Keynes University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
- Northampton General Hospital NHS Trust
- Surrey and Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust
- Somerset NHS Foundation Trust
- The Walton Centre NHS Foundation Trust
- University Hospitals Bristol and Weston NHS Foundation Trust
- University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire NHS Trust

Independent Sector

- Fulwood Hall Hospital, Preston
- Euxton Hall Hospital, Chorley
- Ashted Hospital, Leatherhead
- North Downs Hospital, Caterham

Field testing and impact on published RTT waiting times data

Field testing started in early August 2019. Throughout field testing, RTT waiting times data by weekly time band will continue to be collected and published for each of the CRS providers. However, from the publication of August 2019 data on 10 October 2019, and throughout the course of field testing, performance against the existing 18 week standard will not be calculated or published for the NHS CRS providers to reflect the change in the performance framework under which the CRS providers are operating. This means that the following values will be blanked out for CRS providers:

- % of incomplete pathways within 18 weeks
- 92nd percentile waiting time (in weeks) for incomplete pathways
- Total number of pathways within 18 weeks

The same approach applied to the Independent Sector providers from the publication of October 2019 data on 13 December 2019.

The same approach will also apply to those CCGs for whom a large proportion of RTT activity is accounted for by the CRS providers. At the start of field testing these were:

NHS Blackburn with Darwen CCG
 NHS Calderdale CCG
 NHS Coventry and Rugby CCG
 NHS Crawley CCG
 NHS East Lancashire CCG
 NHS East Surrey CCG
 NHS Greater Huddersfield CCG
 NHS Harrogate and Rural District CCG
 NHS Milton Keynes CCG
 NHS Nene CCG
 NHS Newham CCG
 NHS Somerset CCG
 NHS Tower Hamlets CCG
 NHS Waltham Forest CCG

As a result of provider and commissioner mergers from April 2020, the list was updated as follows:

NHS Blackburn with Darwen CCG
NHS East Lancashire CCG
NHS Calderdale CCG
NHS Greater Huddersfield CCG
NHS Milton Keynes CCG
NHS Coventry and Rugby CCG
NHS Newham CCG
NHS Tower Hamlets CCG
NHS Waltham Forest CCG
NHS Somerset CCG

As a result of commissioner mergers from April 2021, the list was updated as follows:

NHS Blackburn with Darwen CCG
NHS East Lancashire CCG
NHS Calderdale CCG
NHS Somerset 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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