Cancer Waiting Times, July to September 2023 - 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 9th November 2023 according to the arrangements approved by the UK Statistics Authority. Quarter Two statistics are on an updated methodology as of July 2023[1].

In 2010, the United Kingdom Statistics Authority assessed and designated these statistics as National Statistics[2], in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics[3].

The 28-Day Faster Diagnosis Standard are published from April 2021 data in June 2021. The Faster Diagnosis Standard statistics are designated official statistics, not National Statistics, until the Office for Statistics Regulation have performed a check of the new data for compliance with the Code of Practice. We would like to receive feedback on these new statistics – please email feedback to england.cancerwaitsdata@nhs.net

Waiting Times for Cancer Services - Quarter Two 2023

The key results for outpatient services and first definitive treatments show that, in England, during the period July to September 2023:

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[1] Quarter Two statistics are on an updated methodology. The guidance for cancer waiting times has been updated to version 11.1. This replaces CWT Guidance (v.11.0) as well as incorporating & replacing interim guidance which had been put in place (Clarification of cancer waiting times guidance during COVID-19 pandemic, Dermatology Faster Diagnosis Standard clarification guidance and Advice and Guidance recommendations for cancer pathways). 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 Statistical Release for July 2023.

[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

Two week Wait:
- 75.5% of people were seen by a specialist within two weeks of an urgent referral for suspected cancer (79.8% in Q1 2023/24)
- 71.1% of people urgently referred for breast symptoms (where cancer was not initially suspected) were seen within two weeks of referral (74.1% in Q1 2023/24)

One month (31-day) wait from diagnosis to first definitive treatment:
- 90.8% of people treated began first definitive treatment within 31 days of receiving their diagnosis, all cancers (90.7% in Q1 2023/24)
- 91.3% of people treated for breast cancer began first definitive treatment within 31 days of receiving their diagnosis (89.7% in Q1 2023/24)
- 92.9% of people treated for lung cancers began first definitive treatment within 31 days of receiving their diagnosis (91.7% in Q1 2023/24)
- 88.5% of people treated for lower gastrointestinal cancers began first definitive treatment within 31 days of receiving their diagnosis (88.2% in Q1 2023/24)
- 90.7% of people treated for urological cancers began first definitive treatment within 31 days of receiving their diagnosis (90.6% in Q1 2023/24)
- 87.0% of people treated for skin cancers began first definitive treatment within 31 days of receiving their diagnosis (88.8% in Q1 2023/24)

Two month (62-day) wait from urgent referral to first definitive treatment:
- 61.6% of people treated began first definitive treatment within 62 days of being urgently referred for suspected cancer, all cancers (59.6% in Q1 2023/24)
- 70.8% of people treated for breast cancers received first definitive treatment within 62 days of being urgently referred for suspected cancer (70.3% in Q1 2023/24)
- 49.3% of people treated for lung cancers received first definitive treatment within 62 days of being urgently referred for suspected cancer (47.2% in Q1 2023/24)
- 42.9% of people treated for lower gastrointestinal cancers received first definitive treatment within 62 days of being urgently referred for suspected cancer (41.3% in Q1 2023/24)
- 54.0% of people treated for urological cancers (excluding testicular cancer) received first definitive treatment within 62 days of being urgently referred for suspected cancer (49.4% in Q1 2023/24)
- 82.7% of people treated for skin cancers received first definitive treatment within 62 days of being urgently referred for suspected cancer (85.3% in Q1 2023/24)

62-day wait extensions
- 73.9% of patients began first definitive treatment within 62 days of a consultant's decision to upgrade their priority, all cancers (73.4% in Q1 2023/24)
- 64.4% of people began first definitive treatment for cancer within 62 days of referral from an NHS cancer screening service, all cancers (63.7% in Q1 2023/24)

The key results for waiting times for second or subsequent treatment show that, in England, during the period July to September 2023:

31-day wait for subsequent treatment
- 78.1% of people began treatment within 31 days where the subsequent treatment was surgery (77.5% in Q1 2023/24)
- 97.8% of people began treatment within 31 days where the subsequent treatment was an anti-cancer drug regimen (97.6% in Q1 2023/24)
- 88.2% of people began treatment within 31 days where the subsequent treatment was a course of radiotherapy (86.1% in Q1 2023/24)

The key results for waiting times for urgent referral to a patient being told they have cancer, or that cancer is definitively excluded show that, in England, during the period July to September 2023:

28-day Faster Diagnosis (All Routes):

The Faster Diagnosis Standard statistics are designated official statistics, not National Statistics.
- 71.8% of people were told by a specialist if they had cancer, or if cancer was definitively excluded within four weeks (28-days) of an urgent referral (72.1% in Q1 2023/24)

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/

Changes to Cancer Waiting Times standards and Official Statistics

Following a consultation on the cancer waiting times standards, NHS England have had approval from government to implement changes to the standards from 1 October 2023.

The response to the consultation is published here [NHS England » Cancer waiting times review – Models of care and measurement: consultation response](#)

The statistics on cancer waiting times will be updated to ensure that they follow the changed operating framework for cancer, and address responses to the consultation on disaggregation of the standards. These changes will begin from the publication of October 2023 data planned to be published in December 2023. The updates are as follows:

- Outputs to give prominence to the headline statistics for the new waiting times standards.
- Maintain the statistics published on the 28 day Faster Diagnosis Standard.
- Include breakdowns of the new 31 and 62 day standards by variables which allow derivation of the old 31 and 62 day standards. That is, for the 31 day standard include breakdowns by treatment stage (first or subsequent) and modality (Anti-cancer drug regimen, Radiotherapy, Surgery, Other), and for the 62 day standard by source of referral (Urgent suspected cancer, Breast Symptomatic, Screening and Consultant Upgrade).
- Remove the breakdown by admitted and non admitted care from treatment standards.
- For the 31 and 62 day standards, provide a more granular tumour type breakdown for a range of cancers by sub dividing the categories currently published. Historic data for the new categories will not be available. The new classification will be such that the old classification for the current 31 first and 62 day urgent suspected cancer will be able to be derived from aggregation of the new categories to create a consistent time series. That is, adopt the following new categories: Lung, Breast, Skin, Lower GI, Prostate, Other Urological, Lymphoma, Other haematological, OG, Hepatobiliary, Head and Neck, Gynaecological and 'All Other' cancers.
- 31-day referral to treatment performance for acute leukaemia, children's and testicular cancers will no longer be published separately, as no performance standard has been applied to this report for some time and reported numbers are extremely small. Data for these cancers will continue to be included within the wider 62-day referral to treatment data.
- Continue to publish total numbers seen following an urgent suspected cancer referral and urgent referral where breast symptoms are exhibited but cancer is not initially suspected. Maintain the time waited bands as currently published for these measures, but cease publication of the % seen within 14 days which was the two week wait

performance measure which is being removed from the operating framework.
- Publish further management information on the backlog.

NHS England will initially adopt an official statistics badge for all the updated statistical outputs, pending assessment by the Office for Statistics Regulation.

Feedback can be sent through to england.cancerwaitsdata@nhs.net

Contact address and email

You can obtain further details about the statistics published in this section or comment on the section by contacting the following address:

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