

# Health performance indicators in Wales

## Research Briefing

September 2019



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National Assembly for Wales  
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### **Paper Overview:**

This briefing sets out the targets and where statistics can be found for the main health performance indicators in Wales.

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## Time spent in Accident and Emergency departments

The [NHS Wales Delivery Framework and Reporting Guidance 2019-2020](#) is used to measure delivery in the NHS in Wales throughout 2019-20.

The targets relating to time spent in accident and emergency (A&E) departments are:

- 95 per cent of patients to spend less than 4 hours in all major and minor emergency care (i.e. A&E) facilities from arrival until admission, transfer or discharge; and
- No patient to spend 12 hours or more in all hospital major and minor emergency care facilities from arrival until admission, transfer or discharge.

The [Welsh Government publishes monthly reports](#) that summarise data on activity and performance in the Welsh NHS. They include the latest available monthly information plus a summary of long term trends. Information on **time spent in A&E departments is included in the reports.**

- **This data is also available in the [NHS activity and performance summary dashboard](#)**, which is an online tool providing additional activity information where users can interact with and explore the data.
- Data on time spent waiting in NHS Wales A&E departments is published monthly on the [StatsWales](#) website. Figures are available showing performance against 4, 8 and 12 hour waiting time targets.
- Further information (including the categorisation of emergency care facilities in Wales) is available in the Welsh Government’s publication [Time Spent in NHS Wales Accident and Emergency Departments Quality Report](#).

## Referral to Treatment waiting times

**Referral to Treatment Time** (RTT) is the period of time from referral by a GP or other medical practitioner to hospital for treatment in the NHS in Wales. An RTT pathway is covers the time waited from referral to hospital for treatment in the NHS in Wales and includes time spent waiting for any hospital appointments, tests, scans or other procedures that may be needed before treatment.

The [NHS Wales Delivery Framework and Reporting Guidance 2019-2020](#) is used to measure delivery in the NHS in Wales throughout 2019-20.

The targets relating to Referral to Treatment times in Wales are as follows:

- 95 per cent of patients waiting less than 26 weeks from referral to treatment; and
- No patients waiting more than 36 weeks for treatment.

- The **Welsh Government publishes monthly reports** that summarise data on activity and performance in the Welsh NHS. They include the latest available monthly information plus a summary of long term trends. Information on **RTT** is included in the reports.
- This data is also available in the [NHS activity and performance summary dashboard](#), which is an online tool providing additional activity information and users can interact with and explore the data.
- Detailed monthly statistics on RTT waiting times in Wales are available on the [StatsWales website](#).
- **Further information is also available in the Welsh Government's publication [NHS Wales Referral to Treatment Times: Quality Report](#)**

## Diagnostic and therapy services waiting times

The [NHS Wales Delivery Framework and Reporting Guidance 2019-2020](#) is used to measure delivery in the NHS in Wales throughout 2019-20.

**Waiting times for access to diagnostic and therapy services have the following targets (operational standards for maximum waiting times):**

- The maximum wait for access to specified diagnostic tests is 8 weeks; and
- The maximum wait for access to specified therapy services is 14 weeks.

- The **Welsh Government publishes monthly reports** that summarise data on activity and performance in the Welsh NHS. They include the latest available monthly information plus a summary of long term trends. Information on **diagnostic and therapy services waiting times** is included in the reports.
- This data is also available in the [NHS activity and performance summary dashboard](#), which is an online tool providing additional activity information and users can interact with and explore the data.
- Statistics showing monthly data on the number of people waiting and times waited for specific diagnostic and therapy services is available on the [StatsWales website](#).
- **Further information is also available in the Welsh Government's publication [NHS Wales Diagnostic and Therapy Services Waiting Times Quality Report](#)**, which provides details on which diagnostic and therapy services are included in the waiting times statistics.

## Cancer waiting times

In November 2018, the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Services, Vaughan Gething, **announced** that a new single cancer pathway would be introduced across Wales in 2019. The introduction of a single cancer pathway will replace the urgent suspected cancer and non-urgent suspected cancer pathways.

The single cancer pathway will measure the wait of patients on the two traditional pathways but a patient's waiting time will begin from the point of a suspicion of cancer rather than the point of diagnosis. The single pathway is for all cancer patients, whether referred by the GP or identified through an emergency presentation, an incidental finding, screening or during an appointment in secondary care.

Wales began publicly reporting on the single cancer pathway from June 2019. The traditional urgent suspected cancer and non-urgent suspected cancer pathways will continue to be reported alongside the single cancer pathway. The Welsh Government says this is to ensure maximum transparency and to allow comparison against the traditional targets. At an appropriate point in the future it is expected that a transition will take place to solely report on the new pathway measure.

The new pathway starts the waiting time clock earlier, and aims to more accurately measure the patient experience. The Welsh Government notes that, while lower percentage figures on the new pathway are expected to be seen, this does not necessarily mean people are waiting any longer.

The [NHS Wales Delivery Framework and Reporting Guidance 2019-2020](#) is used to measure delivery in the NHS in Wales throughout 2019-20.

A definitive **single cancer pathway** target has not yet been set, but patients should start first definitive treatment within 62 days from the point of suspicion of cancer. Under the 2019-20 Delivery Framework, a 12 month improvement trend is expected.

**The traditional targets relating to cancer waiting times are:**

- At least 95 per cent of patients newly diagnosed with cancer, via the urgent suspected cancer routes, will start definitive treatment within 62 days of receipt of referral; and
- At least 98 per cent of patients newly diagnosed with cancer, not via the urgent route, will start definitive treatment within 31 days of diagnosis (regardless of the referral route).

- The **Welsh Government publishes monthly reports** that summarise data on activity and performance in the Welsh NHS. They include the latest available monthly information plus a summary of long term trends. Information on **cancer waiting times** is included in the reports.
- This data is also available in the [NHS activity and performance summary dashboard](#), which is an online tool providing additional activity information and users can interact with and explore the data.
- **Monthly and quarterly data on cancer waiting times in Wales is available on the StatsWales website. Single cancer pathway figures are currently reported on a monthly basis.**
- **The Welsh Cancer Intelligence & Surveillance Unit** is the National Cancer Registry for Wales and its primary role is to record, store and report on all incidence of cancer for the resident population of Wales wherever they are treated. Further information, along with data, is available on its [website](#).
- Further information is available in the Welsh Government publication [NHS Wales Cancer Waiting Times Quality Report](#).

## Ambulance response times

Following a **trial period** and an independent evaluation report commissioned by the **Emergency Ambulance Services Committee**, a clinical response model for the Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust (WAST) was implemented in **February 2017**.

The **call categories and targets for ambulance response times are as follows:**

**Red:** Immediately life-threatening (someone is in imminent danger of death, such as a cardiac arrest). There is an all-Wales target for 65 per cent of these calls to have a response within 8 minutes.

**Amber:** Serious, but not immediately life-threatening (patients who will often need treatment to be delivered on the scene, and may then need to be taken to hospital). There is no time-based target for amber calls.

**Green:** Non urgent (can often be managed by other health services and clinical telephone assessment). There is no official time based target for these calls.

- The **Welsh Government publishes monthly reports** that summarise data on activity and performance in the Welsh NHS. They include the latest available monthly information plus a summary of long term trends. Information on **ambulance response times** is included in the reports.
- This data is also available in the **NHS activity and performance summary dashboard**, which is an online tool providing additional activity information and users can interact with and explore the data.
- Tables containing a greater level of detail on emergency ambulance services, including 'red' minute by minute performance, are available on **StatsWales**.
- **Further information, including details of the changes to the ambulance response times is available in the Welsh Government's publication *Ambulance Services in Wales Quality Report*.**

## Delayed transfers of care

The term 'delayed transfers of care' is used when inpatients in hospital who are ready to move on to a more appropriate care setting are prevented from doing so for one or more reasons.

- The **Welsh Government publishes monthly reports** that summarise data on activity and performance in the Welsh NHS. They include the latest available monthly information plus a summary of long term trends. Information on **delayed transfers of care** is included in the reports.
- This data is also available in the **NHS activity and performance summary dashboard**, which is an online tool providing additional activity information and users can interact with and explore the data.
- Monthly data on delayed transfers of care in Wales is available on the **StatsWales** website.
- Further information is available in the Welsh Government publication **Delayed transfers of care: quality report**.

