

SUPPORTING PEOPLE WITH HEARING LOSS IN NORTHERN IRELAND

Specsavers

Specsavers Group

Specsavers is the largest providers of NHS / Government funded optometry, eye health and hearing loss services in the world, caring for 44 million people in 15 countries.

Each local practice is owned and run by the clinicians and managers providing care for their communities, in partnership with Specsavers group.

Specsavers has 23 practices in Northern Ireland providing Primary Care General Ophthalmic Services (sight tests and spectacle dispensing), specialist eye health under the Primary Eyecare Assessment and Referral Service, community audiology services (private only) and domiciliary optometric services to the housebound, people in care homes and people in the care of the Northern Ireland Prison Service



Adult-onset Hearing Loss is One of the Great Health Challenges of the 21st C.

- >70% of people over 70 years of age have correctable, age-related hearing loss
- 45% of people with correctable, age-related hearing loss do not seek or receive help¹
- Population of over 70s is growing at > twice the population average (2.35%)
- 94% of cases of hearing loss in adults are Presbycusis (age-related hearing loss) which can safely be treated in the community
- Covid19 lockdown heightened awareness of the needs of older and vulnerable people with hearing loss and the importance to them of personal communication and the ability to access telephony, video calls and broadcast media
- Uncorrected hearing loss leads to social isolation and mental ill health², increases cognitive impairment and hastens the impact of dementia^{3,4}
- Correcting adult onset hearing loss between the ages of 45-65 reduces the risk of dementia by 7%⁵

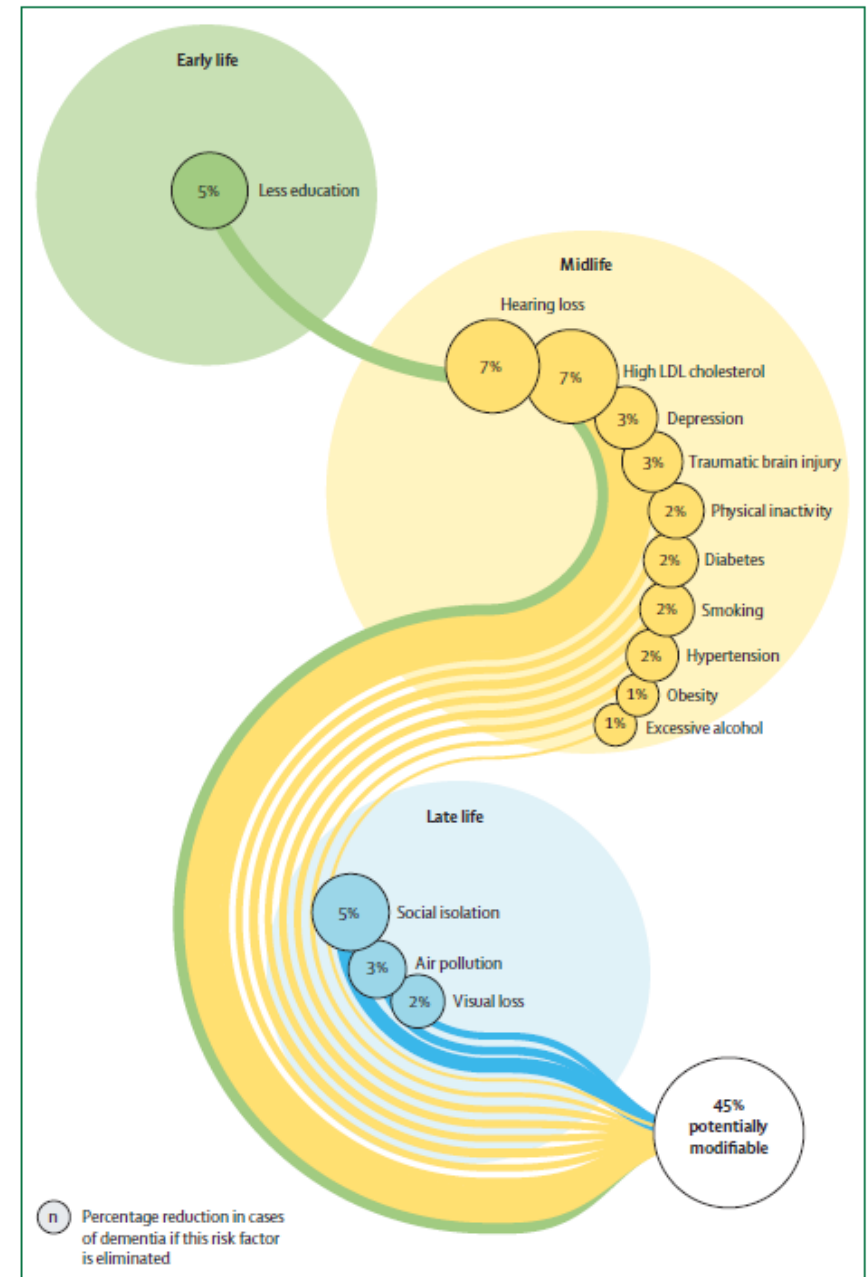
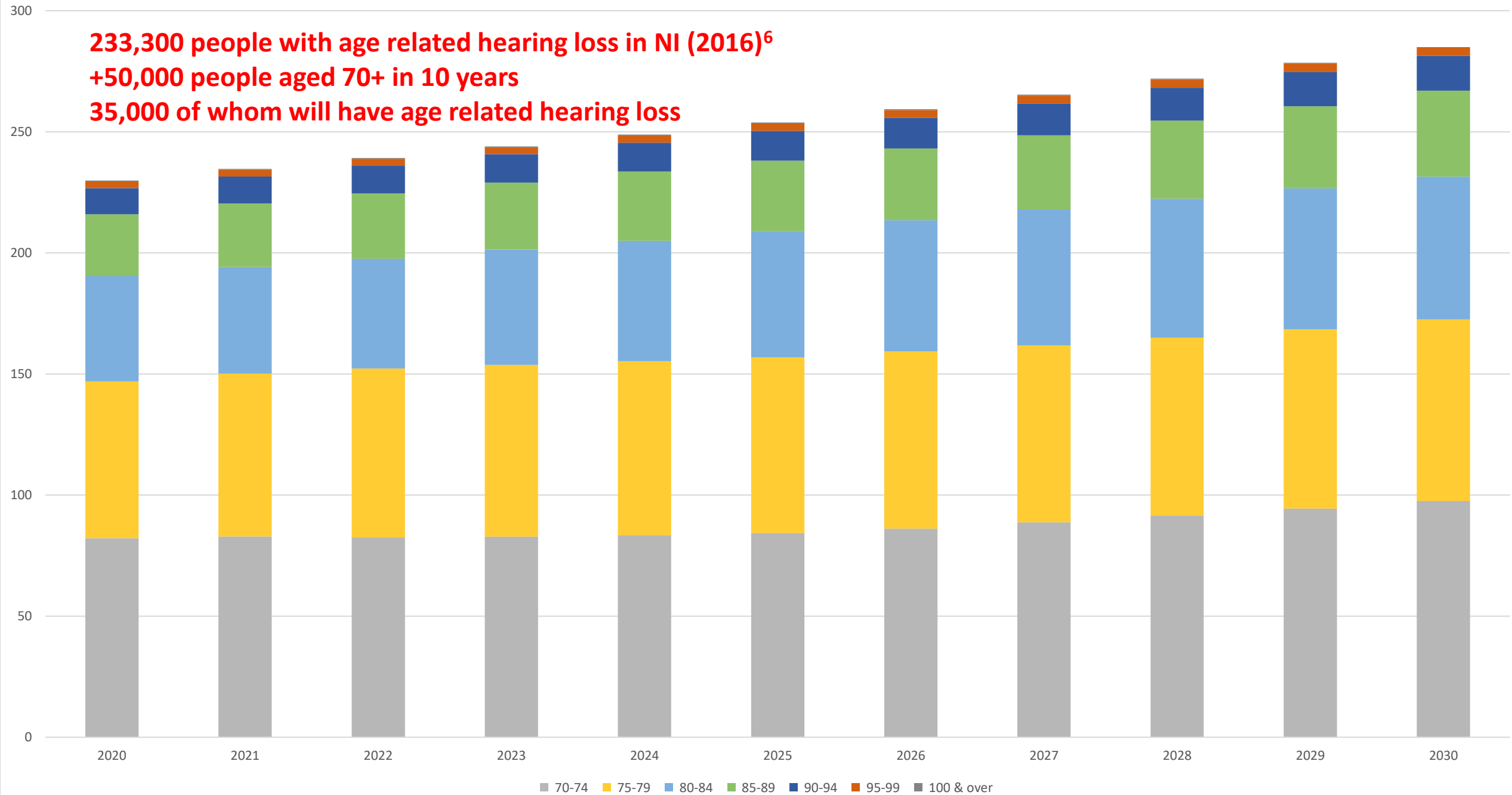


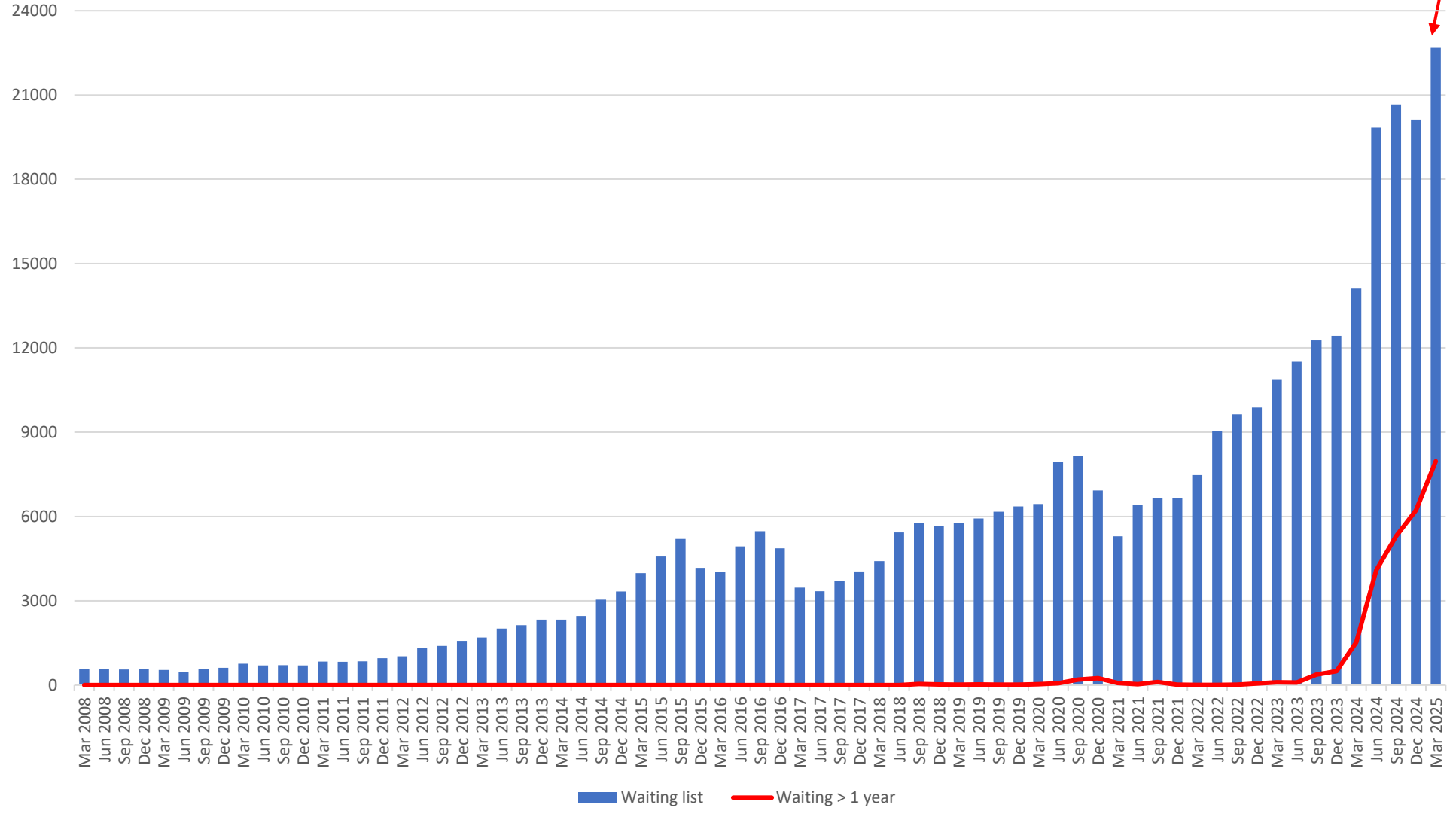
Figure 9: Population attributable fraction of potentially modifiable risk factors for dementia

Population projections by the Office for National Statistics Northern Ireland (PERSONS '000s)

233,300 people with age related hearing loss in NI (2016)⁶
+50,000 people aged 70+ in 10 years
35,000 of whom will have age related hearing loss

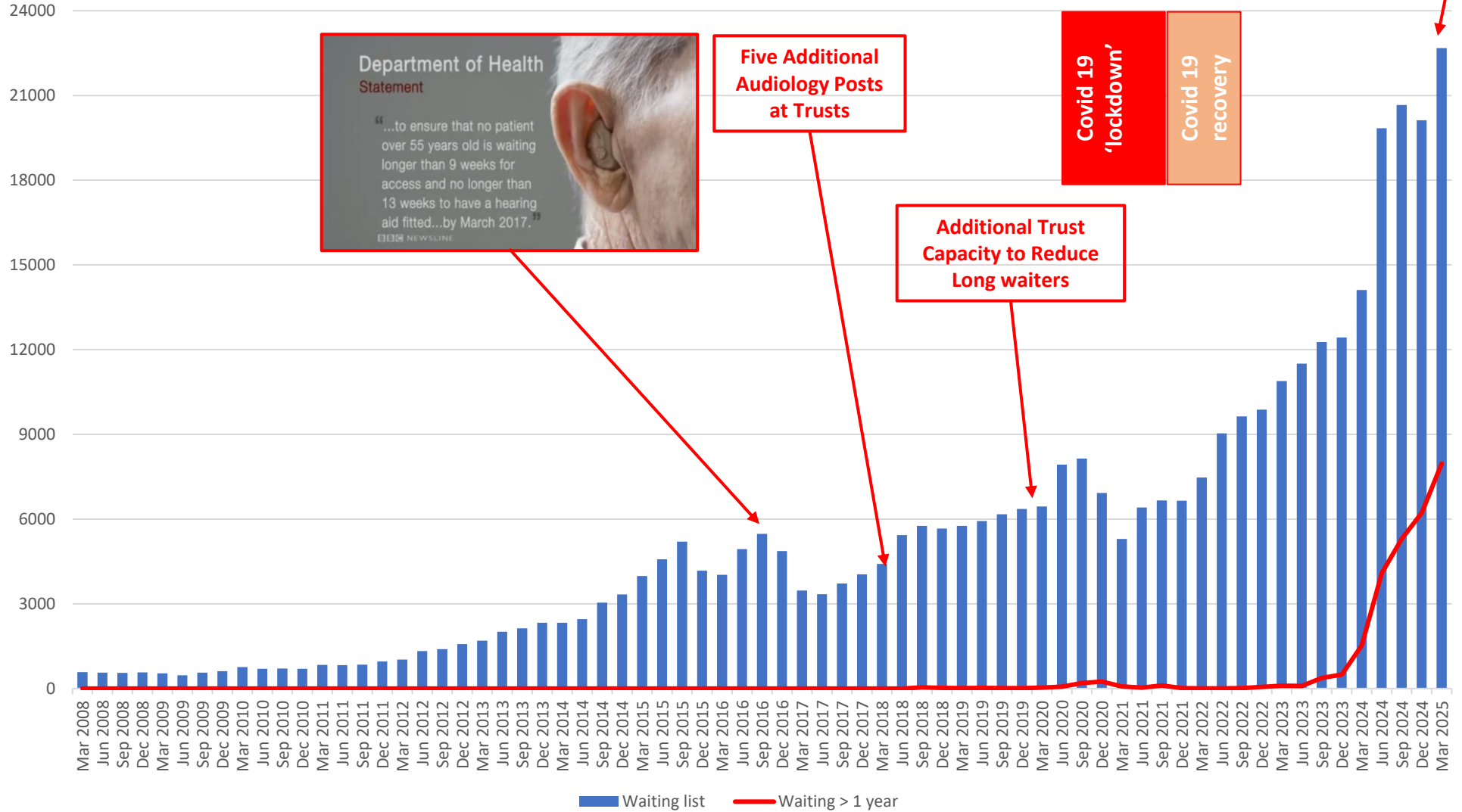


Number of patients waiting for a diagnostic service by type of service and weeks waiting - Pure tone audiometry (Northern Ireland Waiting Time Statistics: Diagnostic Waiting Times. Northern Ireland Department of Health Information Analysis Directorate)

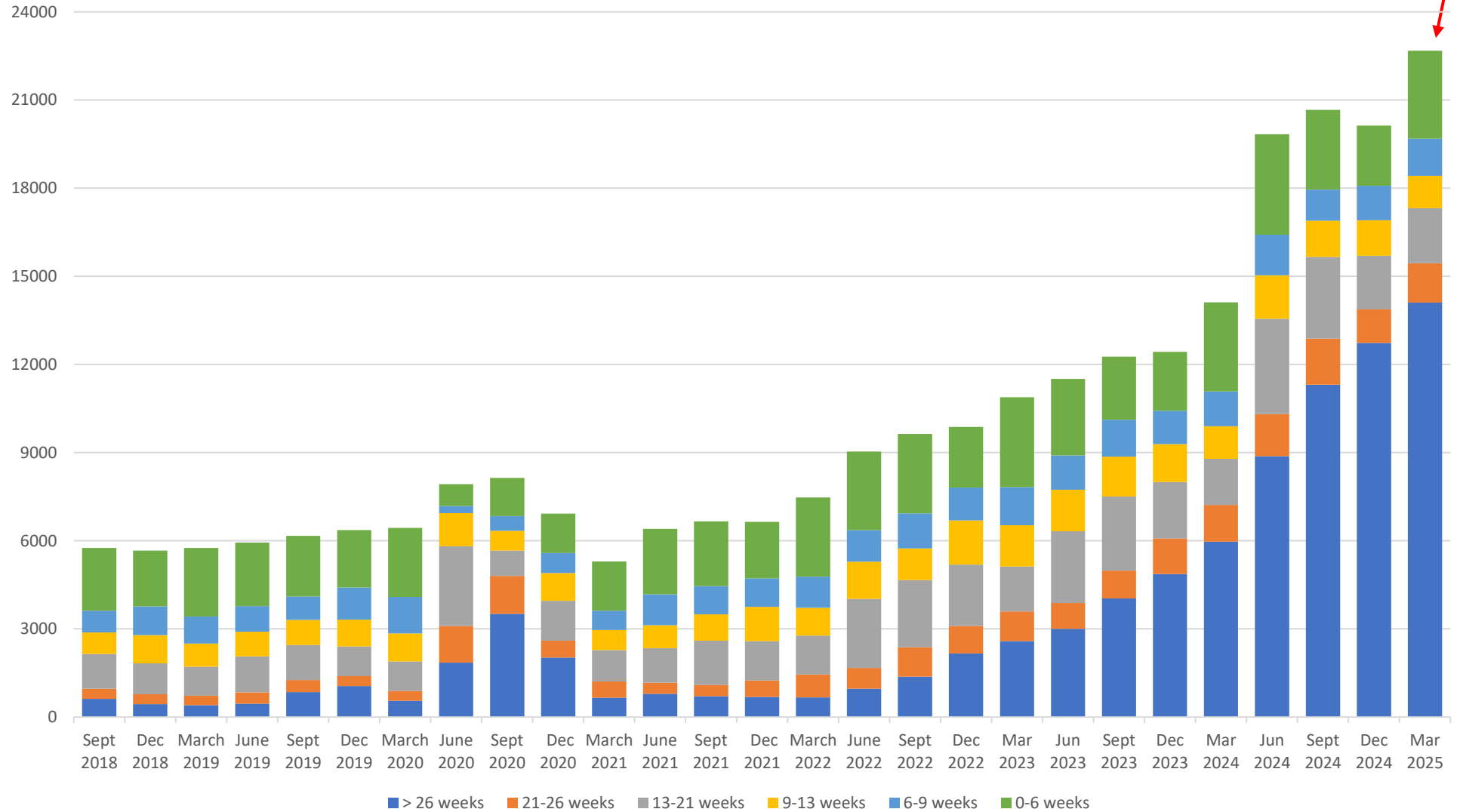


Missing data from Northern Trust

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References

1. NHS England and Department of Health, Action Plan on Hearing Loss, 2015
2. Saito, H et al, Hearing Handicap Predicts the Development of Depressive Symptoms After 3 Years in Older Community, Dwelling Japanese, Journal of the American Geriatrics Society, 58(1), 2010
3. Livingston G, et al, Dementia Prevention, Intervention and Care, The Lancet, 390, 2017
4. Maherani A, et al, Longitudinal Relationship Between Hearing Aid Use and Cognitive Function in Older Americans, Journal of the American Geriatrics Society, April 2018
5. [Dementia prevention, intervention, and care: 2024 report of the Lancet standing Commission - The Lancet](#)
6. <https://www.the-ncha.com/hearing-map/> (accessed 17/10/21)