

Statistics Release



Department of
**Health, Social Services
and Public Safety**

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**Sláinte, Seirbhísí Sóisialta
agus Sábháilteachta Poiblí**

MÁNNYSTRIE O

**Poustie, Resydènter Heisin
an Fowk Siccar**

03 December 2009

Northern Ireland Waiting Lists – September 2009

This statistics release gives details of the number of people waiting for either a first outpatient assessment, a selected diagnostic service or inpatient treatment at hospitals in Northern Ireland at the end of September 2009, the most recent quarter for which figures are available.

Outpatients

Headline Totals¹ – Table 1

The number of patients waiting for a first outpatient appointment at the end of September 2009 stood at 73,707.

Over the quarter, comparing the end of September 2009 with the end of June 2009 (73,987), the total number has decreased by 280 (-0.4%).

Over the year, comparing the end of September 2009 with the end of September 2008 (73,910), the total number waiting decreased by 203 (-0.3%).

Table 1 Quarterly Outpatient Waiting Lists – September 2009¹

	Quarter Ending September 2009	Change compared with end of previous quarter	Change compared with end same quarter - previous year
Total Waiting	73,707	-280	-203

Source: Departmental Return CH3 parts 1 & 2

¹ Refer to Technical Notes - points 3 & 4.

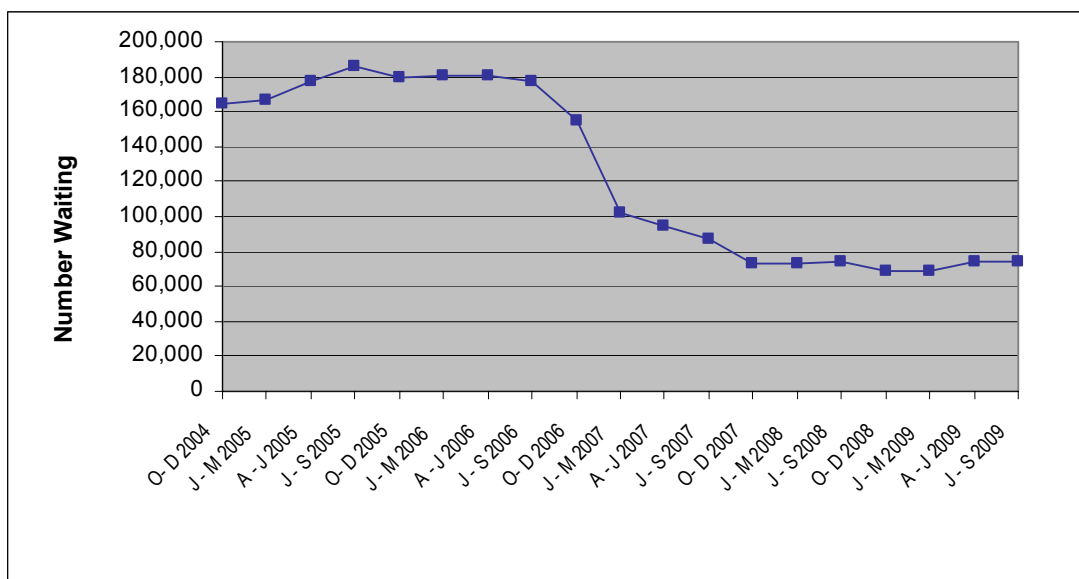
Detailed notes and definitions are provided in the Technical Notes.



Trends

The total number of people waiting for a first outpatient appointment peaked in September 2005. There has been a downward trend since this peak and the outpatient waiting lists total has decreased in six of the previous ten quarters.

Figure 1 Outpatients Waiting for a First Appointment: Five Yearly Trends December 2004 – September 2009



Source: Departmental Return CH3 parts 1 & 2.

Outpatients Waiting More than 9 Weeks

The 2009/10 Priority For Action Target relating to Waiting Times for a first outpatient appointment states that ‘Trusts should ensure that, from April 2009, no patient waits longer than 9 weeks for a first outpatient appointment’. At the end of September 2009, the number of patients waiting more than 9 weeks for a first outpatient appointment was 4,559, 6.2% of the total waiting. Of this number, 2,068 were waiting more than 13 weeks.

Table 2 Patients Waiting More than 9 Weeks² - September 2009

	Quarter Ending September 2009	Change compared with end of previous quarter	Change compared with end same quarter - previous year
Total Waiting	4,559	+3,445	-3,347

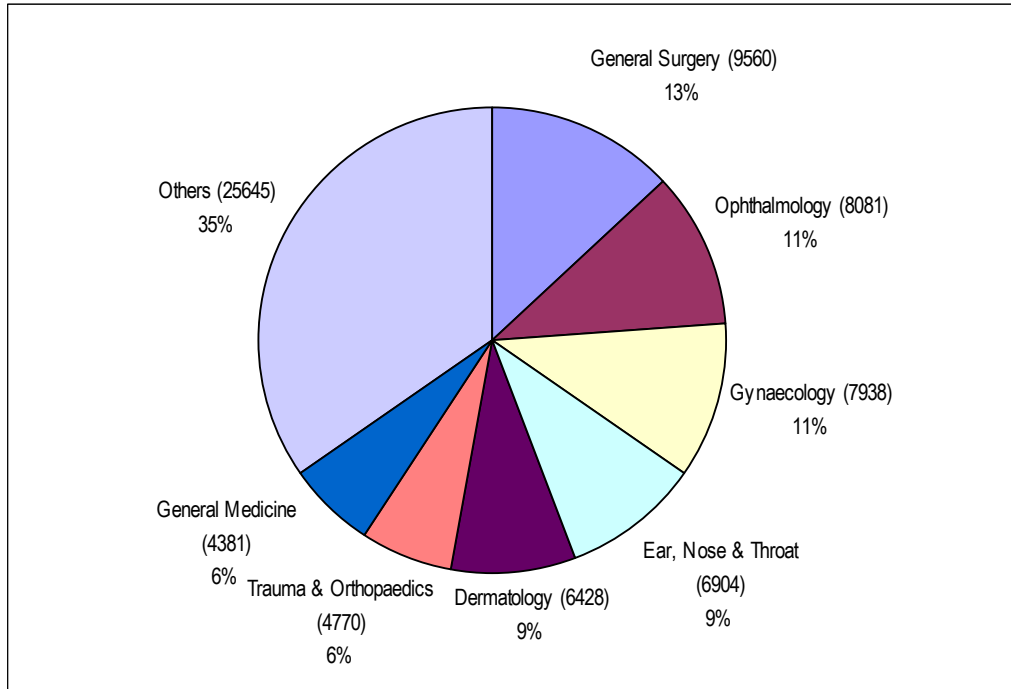
Source: Departmental Return CH3 parts 1 & 2.

² Refer to Technical Notes – points 5 & 6.

Outpatients Waiting by Specialty

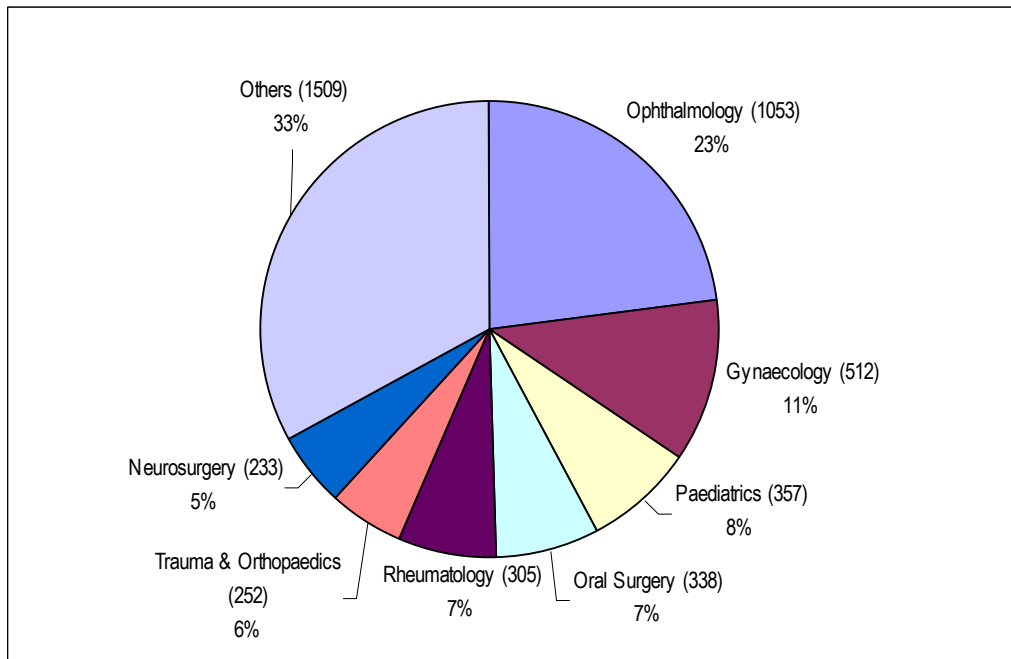
The majority of those waiting (65.0%) were within seven specialties: General Surgery; Ophthalmology; Gynaecology (Gynae); Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT); Dermatology; Trauma & Orthopaedics and General Medicine (Figure 2a). Figures represent the total number waiting for their first outpatient appointment during the September 2009 quarter including those who have cancelled or missed a previous appointment.

Figure 2a Outpatients – Total Waiters by Specialty at the end of September 2009



Source: Departmental Return CH3 Parts 1 & 2.

Figure 2b Outpatients – Patients Waiting More than 9 Weeks by Specialty at the end of September 2009



Source: Departmental Return CH3 Parts 1 & 2.

Outpatient Waiting Time by Specialty

Waiting times for outpatients by specialty are shown in Table 3. Overall 93.8% of those waiting for treatment were waiting less than 9 weeks.

Table 3 Number of Patients Waiting for a First Appointment by Weeks Waiting and Specialty – September 2009²

Specialty	Patients Waiting for an Appointment by Weeks Waiting					Total Number of Patients Waiting
	0-6	>6-9	>9-13	>13-26	26+	
General Surgery	7,682	1,658	132	88	0	9,560
Ophthalmology	5,426	1,602	610	440	3	8,081
Gynaecology	5,725	1,701	367	144	1	7,938
Ear, Nose & Throat	5,610	1,260	34	0	0	6,904
Dermatology	5,076	1,348	4	0	0	6,428
Trauma & Orthopaedics	2,808	1,710	161	91	0	4,770
General Medicine	3,351	884	118	28	0	4,381
Cardiology	2,200	674	33	22	7	2,936
Paediatrics	2,017	530	130	139	88	2,904
Urology	1,672	582	141	78	9	2,482
Neurology	1,717	515	124	61	0	2,417
Oral Surgery	1,466	491	179	159	0	2,295
Rheumatology	1,388	374	104	192	9	2,067
Gastroenterology	1,039	326	7	0	0	1,372
Pain Management	786	318	80	1	0	1,185
Geriatric Medicine	775	195	8	0	0	978
Plastic Surgery	634	170	1	0	0	805
Thoracic Medicine	638	126	5	1	0	770
Restorative Dentistry	569	133	0	0	0	702
Neurosurgery	205	95	110	123	0	533
Other	3,038	634	143	242	142	4,199
All Specialties	53,822	15,326	2,491	1,809	259	73,707

Source: Departmental Return CH3 Parts 1 & 2

² Refer to Technical Notes – points 5 & 6.

Outpatient Waiting Times by Provider Trust

Waiting times for outpatients by Trust are shown in Table 4.

Table 4 Number of Patients Waiting for a First Appointment by Provider Trust and Weeks Waiting – September 2009²

Provider Trust	Patients Waiting for an Appointment by Weeks Waiting					Total Number of Patients Waiting
	0-6	>6-9	>9-13	>13-26	26+	
Belfast	19,371	6,632	1,224	930	250	28,407
Northern	7,890	2,083	112	14	0	10,099
South Eastern	8,911	1,714	0	0	0	10,625
Southern	8,648	2,592	0	3	0	11,243
Western	9,002	2,305	1,155	862	9	13,333
Total	53,822	15,326	2,491	1,809	259	73,707

Source: Departmental Return CH3 Parts 1 & 2

²Refer to Technical Notes – points 5 & 6.

Completed Outpatient Waits – September 2009

The number of completed outpatient waits, for patients treated within Health Service hospitals in Northern Ireland, is shown in Table 5. A total of 119,841 patients attended a first outpatient appointment within Health Service hospitals during the September 2009 quarter.

Table 5 Completed Outpatient Waits for First Appointment³

Quarter	Total Number of Completed Outpatient Waits
J - S 2006	102,391
O- D 2006	115,747
J - D 2006	426,814
J - M 2007	120,388
A - J 2007	117,021
J - S 2007	112,569
O- D 2007	121,090
J - D 2007	471,068
J - M 2008	114,002
A - J 2008 ^R	122,401
J - S 2008 ^R	113,478
O- D 2008 ^R	122,883
J - D 2008	472,764
J - M 2009 ^R	122,149
A - J 2009 ^P	122,379
J - S 2009 ^P	119,841

Source: Departmental Return QOAR

³Refer to Technical Note – point 8.

R - Revised

P – Provisional

Completed Outpatient Waits including Independent Sector Activity– September 2009

During the September 2009 quarter, a number of patients attended a first outpatient appointment, commissioned by the Health Service, within the Independent Sector. Estimates of the number of such patients attending a first outpatient appointment within the Independent Sector have been provided by commissioning Trusts.

It is estimated that approximately 14,908 Health Service patients attended a first outpatient appointment, within the Independent Sector, during the quarter ending September 2009. When this number is combined with that for outpatients attending a first appointment in Health Service hospitals during the same period, it is estimated that approximately 134,749 outpatients attended a first appointment in Northern Ireland for an assessment commissioned by the Health Service.

Table 6a Completed Outpatient Waits by Trust including Independent Sector Activity – September 2009⁴

Provider Trust	Number of Completed Outpatient Waits within Health Service Hospitals^P	Number of Completed Outpatient Waits in Independent Sector	Total Number of Completed Outpatient Waits Commissioned by Health Service
Belfast	48,287	4,832	53,119
Northern	15,688	2,319	18,007
South Eastern	19,034	3,774	22,808
Southern	17,112	2,005	19,117
Western	19,720	1,978	21,698
Total Treated	119,841	14,908	134,749

Source: Departmental Return QOAR and Health and Social Care Trusts

⁴Refer to Technical Notes – points 8 - 10.

R - Revised

P – Provisional

Completed Outpatient Waits including Independent Sector Activity, Quarter Ending 30 September 2008 – Quarter Ending 30 September 2009

Table 6b has been included to reflect the total completed outpatient waits in the Health Service for the past five quarters.

Table 6b Completed Outpatient Waits by Trust Including Independent Sector Activity⁴, 30 September 2008 – 30 September 2009^P

Provider Trust	Total Number of Completed Outpatient Waits Commissioned by Health Service				
	30 September 2008	31 December 2008	31 March 2009	30 June 2009 ^P	30 September 2009 ^P
Belfast	46,185	50,377	51,238	52,782	53,119
Northern	17,746	19,315	19,403	19,035	18,007
South Eastern	20,153	25,158	22,744	24,849	22,808
Southern	17,948	18,712	19,229	19,142	19,117
Western	20,846	21,426	20,905	23,134	21,698
Total	122,878	134,988	133,519	138,942	134,749

Source: Departmental Return QOAR and Health and Social Care Trusts

⁴ Refer to Technical Notes – points 8 - 10.

R - Revised

P - Provisional

Diagnostic Services

Tables 7 -10 provide details of the number of people waiting for the 16 selected diagnostic services, carried out at hospitals in Northern Ireland, and covered by the maximum waiting time Ministerial target for 2009/10⁵.

Headline Totals – Table 7

The total number of patients waiting for one of the 16 selected diagnostic services at hospitals in Northern Ireland at the end of September 2009 stood at 33,465, a decrease of 1,019 (-3.0%) on the position at 30th June 2009 (34,484) and an increase of 2,820 (9.2%) on the number waiting at the end of September 2008 (30,645).

Table 7 Quarterly Diagnostic Services Waiting List – September 2009⁵

Diagnostic Service Category:	Number of Patients Waiting Quarter Ending September 2009	Change compared with the end of the previous quarter	Change compared with the same quarter previous year
Imaging (excluding Interventional Imaging)	18,195	-756	3,197
Physiological Measurement	5,953	-431	445
Endoscopy (Outpatient)	65	11	-10
Endoscopy (Day Case)	9,252	157	-812
Total waiting for selected diagnostic tests	33,465	-1,019	2,820

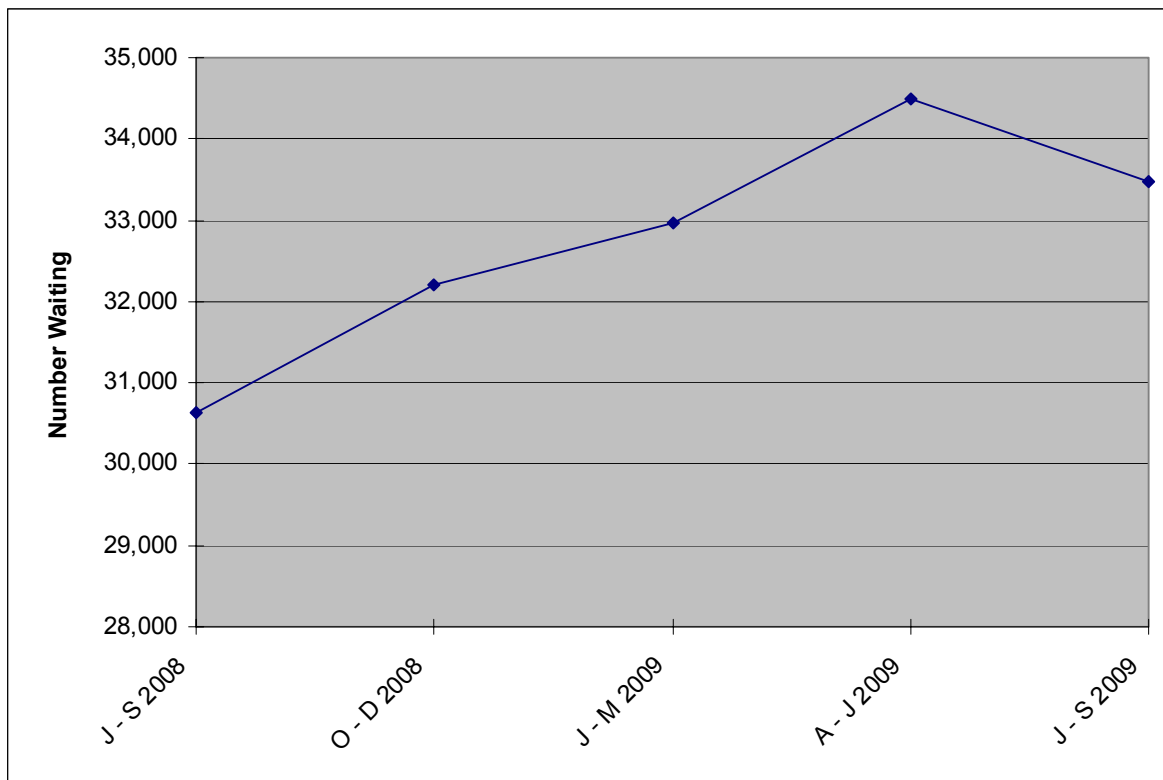
Source: Departmental Return SDR1

⁵Refer to Technical Notes – points 11 - 18.

Trends

The total number of people waiting for a diagnostic service has been on an upward trend over the last three quarters, until this quarter, where the number waiting has fallen slightly.

Figure 3 Patients waiting for a Diagnostic Service, Five Quarterly Trends September 2008 – September 2009



Diagnostic Services Waiting over 9/13 Weeks⁵

The 2009/10 Ministerial target for diagnostic services states that from April 2009, no patient should wait longer than 9 weeks for one of the selected diagnostic tests (13 weeks for a day case endoscopy). There were 806 patients waiting over the target for the 16 selected diagnostic services.

Table 8 Patients Waiting More than the Target - September 2009⁵

Waiting Over Target Waiting Time:	Number of Patients Waiting Quarter Ending September 2009	Change compared with the end of the previous quarter	Change compared with the same quarter previous year
Total	806	561	-2,218

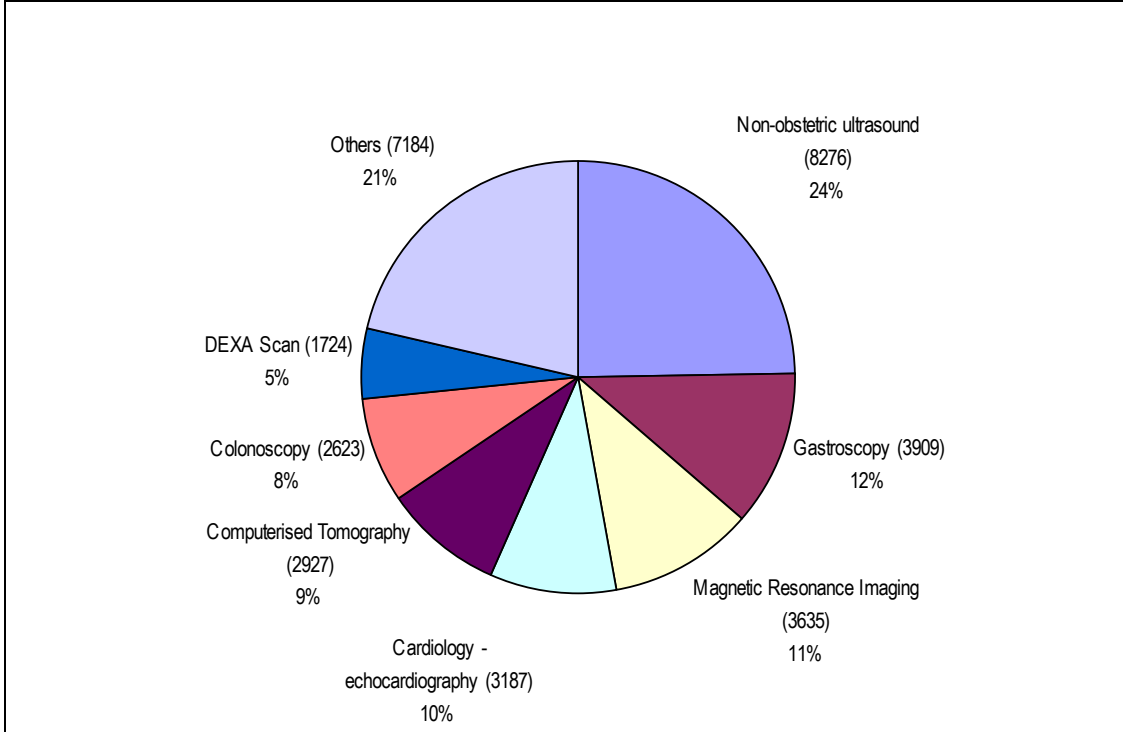
Source: Departmental Return SDR1

⁵Refer to Technical Notes – points 11-18.

Patients Waiting by Diagnostic Service

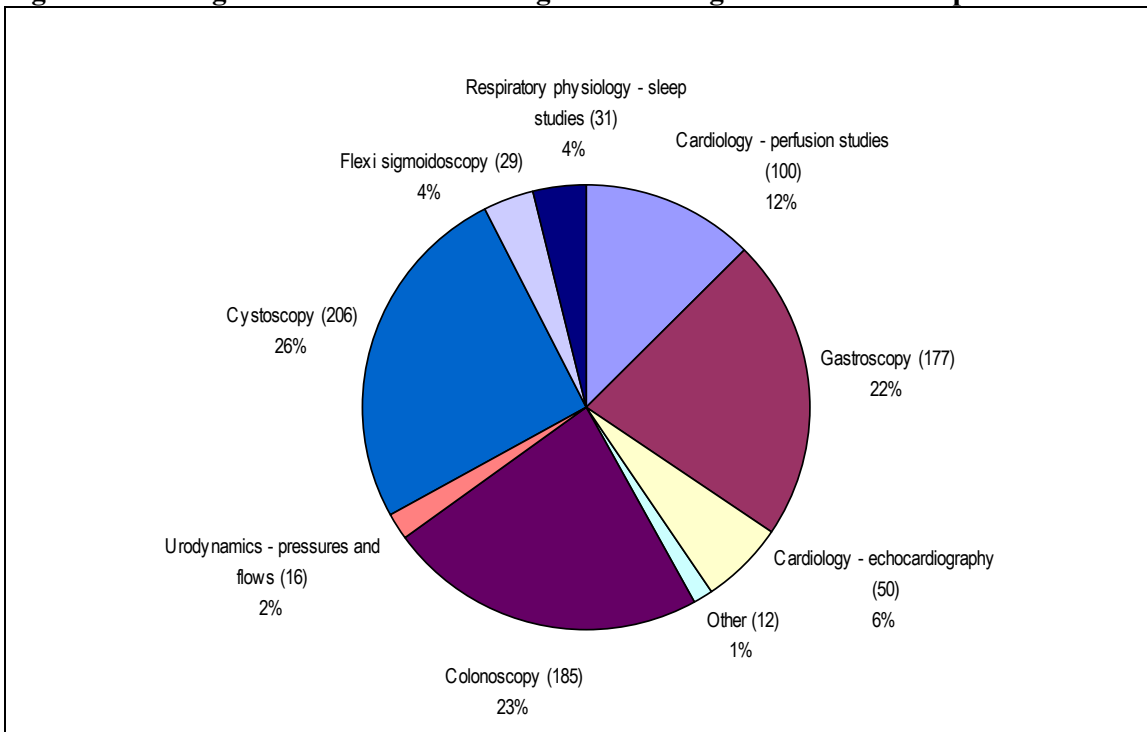
The majority of those waiting (79.0%) were within seven diagnostic services: Non-obstetric Ultrasound; Gastroscopy; Magnetic Resonance Imaging; Echocardiology; Computerised Tomography; Colonoscopy and DEXA scan (Figure 4a). Figures represent the total number waiting for a diagnostic service at the end of September 2009 quarter.

Figure 4a Diagnostics – Total Waiters by Diagnostic Test at the end of September 2009



Source: Departmental Return SDR1

Figure 4b Diagnostics – Patients waiting over the target at the end of September 2009



Source: Departmental Return SDR1

Table 9 Diagnostic Services Waiting Times by Diagnostic Test and Weeks Waiting – September 2009⁵

Diagnostic Test	Patients Waiting for a Diagnostic Test by Weeks Waiting						Total Number of Patients Waiting
	0 - 6	>6 - 9	>9 - 13	>13 - 21	>21 - 26	26 +	
9 week target							
Magnetic Resonance Imaging	2,876	759	0	0	0	0	3,635
Computerised Tomography	2,535	392	0	0	0	0	2,927
Non Obstetric Ultrasound	7,008	1,259	9	0	0	0	8,276
Barium Studies	979	90	0	0	0	0	1,069
DEXA Scan	1,447	277	0	0	0	0	1,724
Radio Nuclide Imaging	524	40	0	0	0	0	564
Audiology - Pure Tone	495	72	0	0	0	0	567
Cardiology - Echocardiography	2,528	609	50	0	0	0	3,187
Cardiology - Perfusion Studies	314	114	100	0	0	0	528
Neurophysiology - Peripheral Neurophysiology	762	211	3	0	0	0	976
Respiratory Physiology - Sleep Studies	195	79	16	15	0	0	305
Urodynamics - Pressures & Flows	272	102	16	0	0	0	390
Colonoscopy (Outpatient)	5	1	1	4	1	0	12
Flexi sigmoidoscopy (Outpatient)	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Cystoscopy (Outpatient)	14	8	14	13	0	0	49
Gastroscopy (Outpatient)	1	1	1	0	0	0	3
13 week target							
Colonoscopy (Day Case)	1,427	530	475	153	26	0	2,611
Flexi sigmoidoscopy (Day Case)	806	323	226	27	2	0	1,384
Cystoscopy (Day Case)	759	211	202	146	12	21	1,351
Gastroscopy (Day Case)	2,242	813	675	172	3	1	3,906
Total waiting for selected diagnostic tests	25,190	5,891	1,788	530	44	22	33,465

Source: Departmental Return SDR1

⁵Refer to Technical Notes – points 11 - 18.

Waiting times for diagnostic services by Trust are shown in Table 10.

Table 10 Diagnostic Services Waiting Times by Provider Trust – September 2009⁵

Diagnostic Test	Patients Waiting for a Diagnostic Test by Weeks Waiting						Total Number of Patients Waiting
	0 - 6	>6 - 9	>9 - 13	>13 - 21	21- 26	26 +	
Belfast	8,143	2,773	539	116	11	22	11,604
Northern	3,806	697	382	345	32	0	5,262
South Eastern	3,917	776	251	0	0	0	4,944
Southern	5,221	806	288	13	0	0	6,328
Western	4,103	839	328	56	1	0	5,327
Total	25,190	5,891	1,788	530	44	22	33,465

Source: Departmental Return SDR1

⁵Refer to Technical Notes – points 11-18.

Inpatients

Headline Totals⁶ – Table 11

The total number of patients waiting to be admitted to hospitals in Northern Ireland at the end of September 2009 stood at 32,765.

Over the quarter, comparing the end of September 2009 with the end of June 2009 (32,390), the total number waiting has increased by 375 (1.2%). Comparing the end of September 2009 with the end of September 2008 (36,839), the total number waiting has decreased by 4,074 (-11.1%).

Table 11 **Quarterly Inpatient Waiting Lists – September 2009**

Waiting for:	Quarter Ending September 2009	Change compared with end of previous quarter	Change compared with end same quarter – previous year
Ordinary Admissions	10,306	-127	-1,892
Day case Admissions	22,459	+ 502	-2,182
Total Waiting	32,765	+ 375	-4,074

Source: DHSSPS Inpatient Waiting Times Dataset

⁶ Refer to technical notes – points 1, 2, 19 & 22-26.

Numbers Waiting for Ordinary Admission and Day Case Treatment

People on the inpatient waiting list in Northern Ireland can be waiting for admission to hospital as day cases or as ordinary admissions.

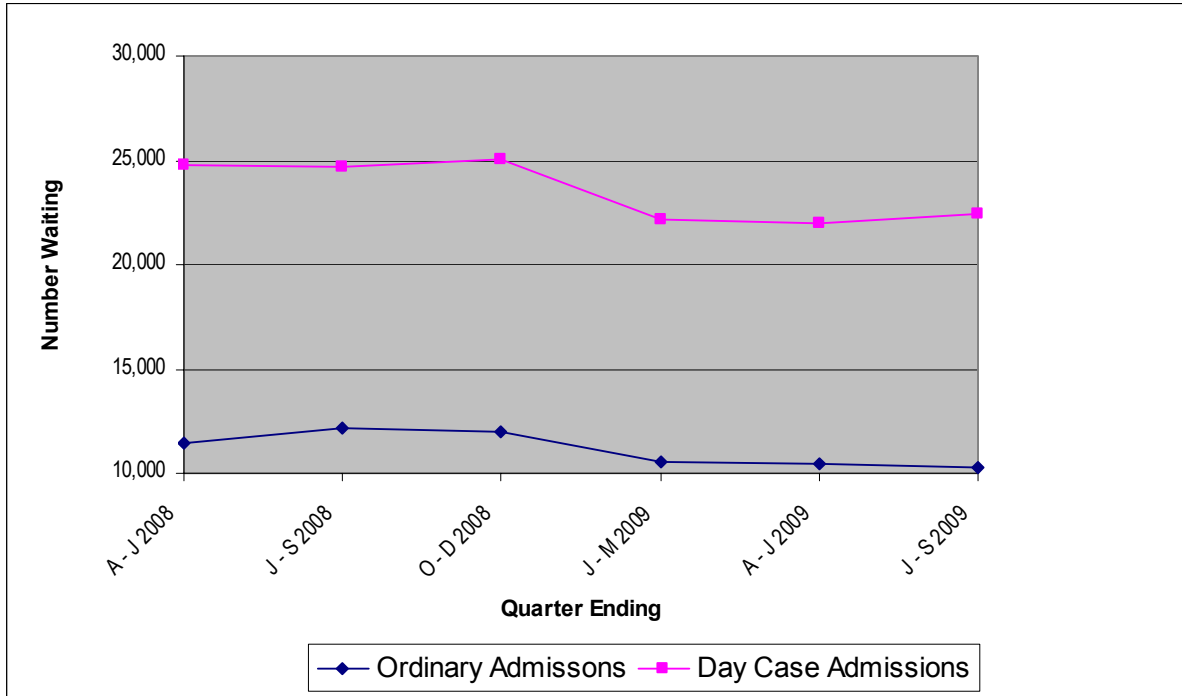
Of the 32,765 people waiting for admission to hospital at the end of September 2009, 10,306 (31.5%) were waiting for ordinary admission and 22,459 (68.5%) were waiting for day case admission (Table 11).

Since the end of June 2009, the number of cases waiting for ordinary admission has decreased by 127 (-1.2%) and the number waiting for day case admission has increased by 502 (2.3%). Compared with the end of September 2008, the number waiting for ordinary admission decreased by 1,892 (-15.5%), while the number waiting for day case admission decreased by 2,182 (-8.9%).

Trends

The total number of patients waiting for both ordinary and day case admission remained reasonably constant over June 2008 – December 2008, showed a decrease at the quarter ending March 2009 and then remained fairly stable for the next two quarters.

Figure 5 Number of patients waiting for (i) Ordinary Admissions and (ii) Day case Admissions, Six Quarterly Trends June 2008 – September 2009



Source: DHSSPS Inpatient Waiting Times Dataset

Ordinary Admission and Day Cases Waiting More Than 13 Weeks⁷ – Table 12

The 2009/10 Priority for Action target relating to waiting times for inpatient treatment, states that from April 2009 no patient should wait longer than 13 weeks for inpatient or day case treatment.

At the end of September 2009, there were 2,975 patients waiting more than 13 weeks for inpatient treatment, of which 562 were waiting more than 21 weeks. Of the 2,975 patients waiting more than 13 weeks, 1,408 (47.3%) were awaiting ordinary admission and 1,567 (52.7%) were awaiting day case procedures.

Table 12 Patients Waiting More Than 13 Weeks⁷ – September 2009

Waiting for:	Quarter Ending September 2009	Change compared with end of previous quarter	Change compared with end same quarter - previous year
Ordinary Admissions	1,408	+ 731	-973
Day Case Admissions	1,567	+ 1127	-2,456
Total Waiting	2,975	+ 1858	-3,429

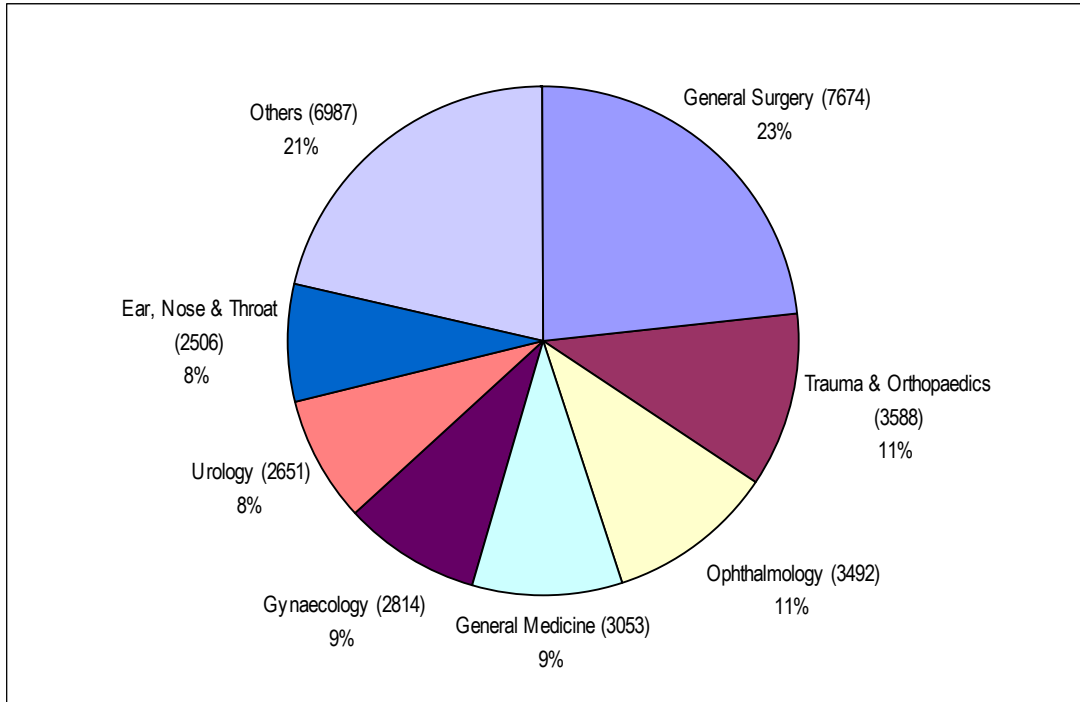
Source: DHSSPS Inpatient Waiting Times Dataset

⁷ Refer to Technical Notes – points 1 & 2 and 20 - 26.

Inpatients Waiting by Specialty

The overwhelming majority of those waiting (79%) were within seven specialties: General Surgery; Trauma and Orthopaedic Surgery (T&O); Ophthalmology; General Medicine; Gynaecology (Gynae); Urology and Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT) (Figure 6a).

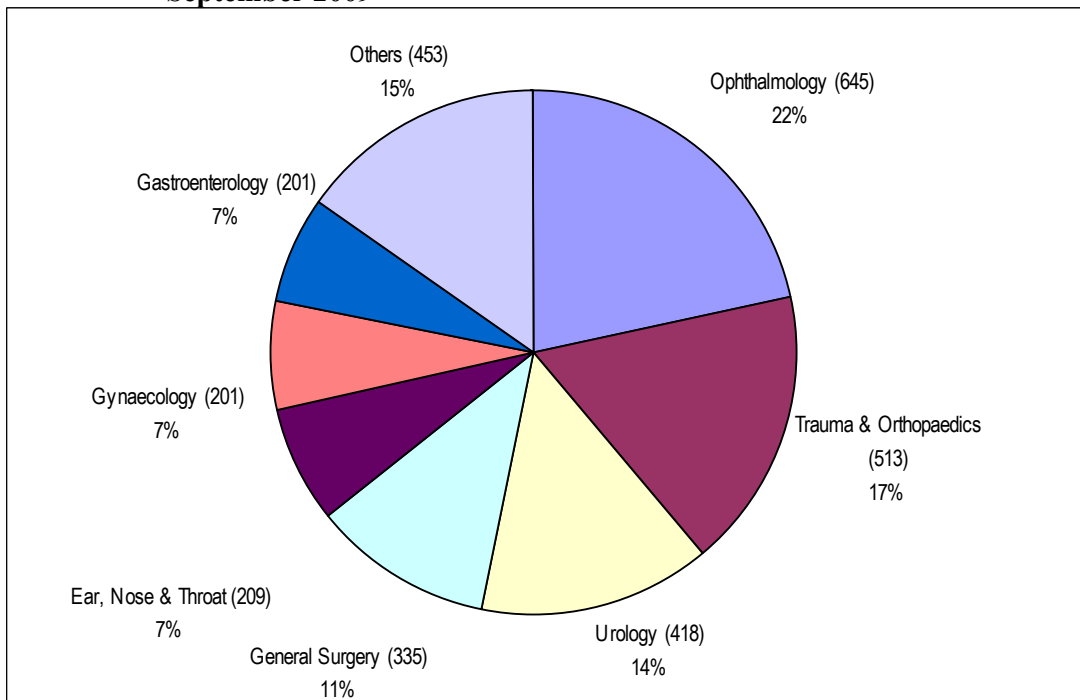
Figure 6a Inpatients - Total Waiters by Specialty at the end of September 2009⁷



Source: DHSSPS Inpatient Waiting Times Dataset

⁷ Refer to Technical Notes – points 1 & 2 and 20 - 26.

Figure 6b Inpatients – Patients waiting more than 13 weeks by Specialty at the end of September 2009⁷



Source: DHSSPS Inpatient Waiting Times Dataset

⁷ Refer to Technical Notes – points 1 & 2 and 20-26.

Inpatient Waiting Time by Specialty

Waiting times for inpatients by specialty are shown in Table 13. Overall 90.9% of those waiting for admission were waiting 13 weeks or less.

Table 13 Number of Patients Waiting for Admission by Weeks Waiting and Specialty – September 2009⁷

Specialty	Patients Waiting for Admission by Weeks Waiting					Total Number of Patients Awaiting Admission
	0 - 6	>6 - 13	>13 - 21	>21 - 26	26+	
General Surgery	4,606	2,733	293	31	11	7,674
Trauma & Orthopaedics	1,699	1,376	317	102	94	3,588
Ophthalmology	1,547	1,300	528	99	18	3,492
General Medicine	1,840	1,125	86	1	1	3,053
Gynaecology	1,581	1,032	192	8	1	2,814
Urology	1,413	820	328	32	58	2,651
Ear, Nose & Throat	1,285	1,012	193	13	3	2,506
Gastroenterology	1,014	777	194	7	0	1,992
Cardiology	562	344	39	5	3	953
Pain Management	406	398	74	1	0	879
Plastic Surgery	351	177	42	3	13	586
Oral Surgery	340	139	8	0	0	487
Dermatology	261	125	30	0	0	416
General Practice (Other)	293	40	0	0	0	333
Rheumatology	122	141	0	0	0	263
Neurosurgery	74	78	51	15	25	243
Cardiac Surgery	112	97	12	1	0	222
Paediatric Surgery	117	73	7	0	0	197
Nephrology	38	38	1	0	0	77
Neurology	55	16	0	0	0	71
Other	183	50	18	10	7	268
All Specialties	17,899	11,891	2,413	328	234	32,765

Source: DHSSPS Inpatient Waiting Times Dataset

⁷ Refer to Technical Notes – points 1 & 2 and 20-26.

Inpatient Waiting Times by Provider Trust

Waiting times for inpatients by Trust are shown in Table 14.

Table 14 Number of Patients Waiting for Admission by Provider Trust and by Weeks Waiting – September 2009⁷

Provider Trust	Patients Waiting for Admission by Weeks Waiting					Total Number of Patients Waiting
	0 - 6	>6 - 13	>13 - 21	>21 - 26	26+	
Belfast	6,509	5,042	1,380	201	169	13,301
Northern	2,794	1,925	601	36	0	5,356
South Eastern	2,528	1,266	0	0	0	3,794
Southern	2,796	1,766	44	0	2	4,608
Western	3,272	1,892	388	91	63	5,706
Total	17,899	11,891	2,413	328	234	32,765

Source: DHSSPS Inpatient Waiting Times Dataset

⁷ Refer to Technical Notes – points 1 & 2 and 20-26.

Completed Inpatient Waits – September 2009

The number of completed inpatient waits, for patients treated within Health Service hospitals in Northern Ireland, is shown in Table 15. A total of 44,598 inpatients were admitted to Health Service hospitals during the September 2009 quarter.

Table 15 Completed Inpatient Waits⁸

Quarter	Total Number of Completed Inpatient Waits^P
J - S 2006	41,377
O - D 2006	46,111
J - D 2006	177,300
J - M 2007	46,173
A - J 2007	46,022
J - S 2007	43,640
O - D 2007	46,492
J - D 2007	182,327
J - M 2008	45,145
A - J 2008 ^R	48,566
J - S 2008 ^R	44,626
O - D 2008 ^R	47,741
J - D 2008	186,078
J - M 2009 ^R	47,223
A - J 2009 ^P	47,192
J - S 2009 ^P	44,598

Source: Hospital Inpatient System

⁸ Refer to Technical Notes – point 27.

R - Revised

P - Provisional

Completed Inpatient Waits including Independent Sector Activity – September 2009

During the September 2009 quarter, a number of patients received inpatient treatment commissioned by the Health Service, within the Independent Sector. Estimates of the number of such patients admitted for inpatient treatment within the Independent Sector have been provided by the commissioning Trust.

It is estimated that approximately 5,967 Health Service patients were treated within the Independent Sector during the quarter ending September 2009. When this number is combined with that for inpatients admitted to Health Service hospitals during the quarter, it is estimated that approximately 50,565 inpatients were admitted to hospital in Northern Ireland for treatment commissioned by the Health Service.

Table 16a Completed Inpatient Waits by Trust including Independent Sector Activity – September 2009⁹

Provider Trust	Number of Completed Inpatient Waits within Health Service Hospitals^P	Number of Completed Inpatient Waits in Independent Sector	Total Number of Completed Inpatient Waits Commissioned by Health Service
Belfast	18,789	2,286	21,075
Northern	6,055	954	7,009
South Eastern	6,757	473	7,230
Southern	6,283	1,436	7,719
Western	6,714	818	7,532
Total Treated	44,598	5,967	50,565

Source: Health and Social Care Trusts

⁹ Refer to Technical Notes – point 28.

P - Provisional

Completed Inpatient Waits including Independent Sector Activity, Quarter Ending 30 September 2008 – Quarter Ending 30 September 2009

Table 16b has been included to reflect the total completed inpatient waits for Health Service patients for the past five quarters.

Table 16b Completed Inpatient Waits by Trust Including Independent Sector Activity¹⁰, 30 September 2008 – 30 September 2009^P

Provider Trust	Total Number of Completed Inpatient Waits Commissioned by Health Service				
	30 September 2008 ^R	31 December 2008 ^R	31 March 2009 ^R	30 June 2009 ^P	30 September 2009 ^P
Belfast	19,791	21,394	21,777	22,550	21,075
Northern	6,403	6,308	7,230	7,338	7,009
South Eastern	7,309	8,085	7,929	8,507	7,230
Southern	7,272	8,122	7,687	7,335	7,719
Western	7,517	8,551	9,010	8,145	7,532
Total	48,292	52,460	53,633	53,875	50,565

Source: Health and Social Care Trusts

¹⁰ Refer to Technical Notes – points 28 & 29.

R - Revised

P - Provisional

Technical Notes

1. The sources for the data contained in this release are the Departmental Returns CH3, Quarterly Outpatient Activity Return (QOAR), SDR1, DHSSPS Inpatient Waiting Time Dataset and Hospital Inpatient System Dataset. These returns collect information from Health and Social Care Trusts on a quarterly basis.
2. Trust based information (CH3, QOAR, SDR1, DHSSPS Inpatient Waiting Time Dataset, and Hospital Inpatients System Dataset) returns include all patients living outside Northern Ireland and all privately funded patients waiting for treatment in Health Service hospitals in Northern Ireland.
3. Outpatient waiters are defined as patients still waiting for their first outpatient appointment at the end of the quarter. An outpatient appointment is to enable a patient to see a consultant, a member of their firm or locum for such a member, in respect of one referral. Waiting time for a first outpatient appointment begins on the date the HSC Trust receives a referral for a first appointment and ends on the date the patient attends a first outpatient appointment. Patients who cannot attend (CNA) have their waiting time adjusted to commence on the date they informed the HSC Trust they could not attend, while patients who do not attend (DNA) have their waiting time adjusted to commence on the date of the DNA.
4. The outpatient waiting time figure for the position at 30th June 2009 has been revised due to an amendment received from the Belfast HSC Trust.
5. For Tables 2, 3, 4 and Figure 2b, outpatient waiting time relates to the number of completed weeks a patient has been waiting for outpatient assessment. For example, a patient waiting exactly 6 weeks would be included in the 0-6 week timeband and a patient waiting exactly 6 weeks and 1 day would be included in the >6-9 (greater than 6 weeks but waiting no longer than 9 weeks) timeband.
6. The current ministerial target for outpatient waiting times states that from April 2009 no patient should wait longer than 9 weeks for a first outpatient appointment. Patients waiting 'more than 9 weeks' include all patients in the >9-13 and >13 – 26 and 26+ week timebands. Patients waiting 'more than 13 weeks' include all patients in the >13 week – 26 and 26+ timebands.
7. Due to technical difficulties it is not currently possible to accurately report on the total number of patients waiting for a first Integrated Clinical Assessment and Treatment Services (ICATS) appointment at 30th September 2009.
8. Hospital Information Branch undertook a National Statistics consultation on proposals to replace Departmental returns CH2 and CH4 with data sourced from Hospital Inpatients System and Quarterly Outpatient Activity Return (QOAR) respectively. These proposals were subsequently endorsed by respondents to the consultation. The new methodology derives the total number of completed outpatient waits each quarter as the total number of attendances at a first outpatient appointment from the Quarterly Outpatient Activity Return. This methodology has been used to produce historical data for comparison. Data on length of time a patient waited for a first outpatient appointment is no longer collected by Hospital Information Branch.
9. The number of patients that received an outpatient assessment, commissioned by the Health Service, in the Independent Sector is provided in Tables 6a and 6b. These figures have been provided for each transferring Health and Social Care Trust (Trust responsible for the patient's waiting time). They are not National Statistics and they have not been validated by the

Department, however, they have been included to provide users with a comprehensive view of completed outpatient waits during each quarter.

10. The number of patients that received an outpatient assessment, commissioned by the Health Service, including those seen within the Independent Sector, has been revised for the quarters ending September 2008, December 2008 and March 2009 to 122,878, 134,988 and 133,519 respectively, due to amendments received from the Northern Health and Social Care Trust. The figure for the quarter ending June 2009 has also been revised to 138,942, due to the receipt of updates.
11. The source for the diagnostic waiting time data is the Departmental Return SDR1. The data are not National Statistics and they have had limited validation by the Department, however, they have been included to provide users with a comprehensive view of waiting times for the selected diagnostic services subject to the 2009/10 Ministerial target.
12. The number of patients exceeding the maximum waiting time target at 30th September 2008 and 30th June 2009 has been revised due to an amendment to the figures for the Northern HSC Trust.
13. A diagnostic service provides an examination, test or procedure used to identify a person's disease or condition and which allows a medical diagnosis to be made.
14. The Ministerial target for diagnostic waiting times states that from April 2009, no patient should wait longer than 9 weeks for one of the selected diagnostic tests (13 weeks for a day case endoscopy). The 16 selected services are: Magnetic Resonance Imaging; Computerised Tomography; Non-Obstetric Ultrasound; Barium Studies; DEXA Scan; Radio-Nuclide Imaging; Pure Tone Audiometry; Echocardiography; Perfusion Studies; Peripheral Neurophysiology; Sleep Studies; Urodynamics Pressures and Flows; Colonoscopy; Flexi Sigmoidoscopy; Cystoscopy and Gastroscopy.
15. The diagnostic waiting time target relates to all tests with a diagnostic element. Included are tests that are part diagnostic and subsequently part therapeutic. A therapeutic procedure is defined as a procedure which involves actual treatment of a person's disease, condition or injury. Purely therapeutic procedures are excluded from the diagnostic waiting times target. Patients currently admitted to a hospital bed and waiting for an emergency procedure, patients waiting for a planned procedure and patients waiting for procedures as part of screening programme are also excluded from the waiting times target.
16. The waiting time for a diagnostic service commences on the date on which the referral for the service is received by the Health Care provider and stops on the date on which the test is performed. Patients who cannot attend (CNA) have their waiting time adjusted to commence on the date they informed the HSC Trust they could not attend, while patients who do not attend (DNA) have their waiting time adjusted to commence on the date of the DNA.
17. A number of the diagnostic services reported on the SDR 1 return are managed as either an ordinary admission or a day case. As such, they will be included in both the inpatient and diagnostic services waiting time figures. Due to the risk of multiple counting, these two sets of data should not be combined to give an estimate of the total number of patients waiting for either inpatient admission or a diagnostic service.
18. Waiting time statistics for day case endoscopies also include patients waiting for endoscopies that are managed as ordinary admissions.
19. The inpatient waiting time figure for the position at 30th September 2008 and 30th June 2009 has been revised due to an amendment received from the Western HSC Trust.

20. For Tables 12, 13, 14 and Figure 6b, inpatient waiting time relates to the number of completed weeks a patient has been waiting for inpatient admission. For example, a patient waiting exactly 6 weeks would be included in the 0-6 week timeband and a patient waiting exactly 6 weeks and 1 day would be included in the >6-13 (greater than 6 weeks but waiting no longer than 13 weeks) timeband.
21. The current ministerial target for inpatient waiting times states that from April 2009 no patient should wait longer than 13 weeks for inpatient or day case treatment. Patients waiting 'more than 13 weeks' include all patients in the >13-21, >21 - 26 week and 26+ timebands. Patients waiting 'more than 21 weeks' include all patients in the >21 - 26 and 26+ week timebands.
22. Inpatient waiting list data comprises the number of patients waiting for ordinary admission to hospital and the number of patients waiting for day case treatment.
23. Ordinary admissions include both (a) patients admitted electively with the expectation that they will remain in hospital for at least one night, and (b) non-elective admissions (e.g. emergency admissions). A patient who is admitted with either of the above intentions, but who leaves hospital for any reason without staying overnight, is still counted as an ordinary admission. Day cases are not included.
24. Day Cases are patients admitted electively during the course of a day with the intention of receiving care who do not require the use of a hospital bed overnight and who return home as scheduled. If this original intention is not fulfilled and the patient stays overnight, such a patient is counted as an ordinary admission.
25. The waiting list inpatient figures presented include people waiting to be admitted as inpatients either as day cases or ordinary admissions. They do not include:
 - Patients admitted as emergency cases;
 - Outpatients;
 - Patients undergoing a planned programme of treatment e.g. a series of admissions for chemotherapy;
 - Maternity (specialties 510 and 520);
 - Patients already in hospitals but included on other waiting lists;
 - Patients who are temporarily suspended from waiting lists.
26. Waiting time begins from the date the clinician decided to admit the patient. Patients subsequently offered a date but unable to attend have their waiting times calculated from the most recent date offered. These are known as CNA's (Could Not Attend) and are included in the total number waiting.
27. Following the National Statistics consultation outlined in point 8, the total number of completed inpatient waits each quarter are now sourced from Hospital Inpatients System. This methodology has been used to produce historical data for comparison. Data on length of time a patient waited for inpatient admission is no longer collected by Hospital Information Branch. Data from April 2009 – September 2009 are provisional.
28. The number of patients that received inpatient treatment, commissioned by the Health Service, in the Independent Sector are provided in Tables 16a and 16b. These figures have been provided for each transferring Health and Social Care Trust (Health Trust responsible for the patient's waiting time). They are not National Statistics and they have not been validated by the Department, however they have been included to provide users with a comprehensive view of completed inpatient waits during each quarter.

29. The number of patients that received inpatient treatment, commissioned by the Health Service, has been revised for the quarters ending September 2008, December 2008, March 2009 and June 2009 to 48,292, 52,460, 53,633 and 53,875 respectively, due to the receipt of updates.
30. Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety policy is to publish revised figures with subsequent statistical releases unless it is decided that the magnitude of the change merits earlier notification.
31. Figures relating to the quarter ending 31st December 2009 will be released on Thursday, 4th March 2010.
32. For general enquiries about National Statistics, contact the National Statistics Public Service on

020 7533 5888

minicom: 01633 812399

E-mail: info@statistics.gov.uk

Fax: 01633 652747

Letters: room DG/18, Drummond Gate,
LONDON SW1V 2QQ

You can also find National Statistics on the internet – Go to www.statistics.gov.uk.

Additional Information

Further information on waiting lists in Northern Ireland is available from:

Office Information Manager

Hospital Information Branch

Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety

Annexe 2

Castle Buildings

Stormont

BT4 3SQ

E-mail: statistics@dhsspsni.gov.uk

Internet address: http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/stats-hospital_community_statistics#waiting