

# Publication Report



## **National Drug and Alcohol Treatment Waiting Times Report**

**July – September 2011**

**20 December 2011**

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## About ISD

Scotland has some of the best health service data in the world combining high quality, consistency, national coverage and the ability to link data to allow patient based analysis and follow up.

Information Services Division (ISD) is a business operating unit of NHS National Services Scotland and has been in existence for over 40 years. We are an essential support service to NHSScotland and the Scottish Government and others, responsive to the needs of NHSScotland as the delivery of health and social care evolves.

**Purpose:** To deliver effective national and specialist intelligence services to improve the health and wellbeing of people in Scotland.

**Mission:** Better Information, Better Decisions, Better Health

**Vision:** To be a valued partner in improving health and wellbeing in Scotland by providing a world class intelligence service.

## Official Statistics

Information Services Division (ISD) is the principal and authoritative source of statistics on health and care services in Scotland. ISD is designated by legislation as a producer of 'Official Statistics'. Our official statistics publications are produced to a high professional standard and comply with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. The Code of Practice is produced and monitored by the UK Statistics Authority which is independent of Government. Under the Code of Practice, the format, content and timing of statistics publications are the responsibility of professional staff working within ISD.

ISD's statistical publications are currently classified as one of the following:

- National Statistics (ie assessed by the UK Statistics Authority as complying with the Code of Practice)
- National Statistics (ie legacy, still to be assessed by the UK Statistics Authority)
- Official Statistics (ie still to be assessed by the UK Statistics Authority)
- other (not Official Statistics)

Further information on ISD's statistics, including compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics, and on the UK Statistics Authority, is available on the [ISD website](#).

## Introduction

This publication presents data from the Drug and Alcohol Treatment Waiting Times Database. It includes details on the number of clients waiting and the time waited for clients to start drug or alcohol treatment, and information on specific interventions being accessed.

Waiting times are important to patients and are a high profile measure of how NHS Scotland is responding to demands for services. These waiting times statistics provide a wide range of users with a clear picture of one aspect of NHS performance across Scotland.

The national HEAT (Health improvement, Efficiency, Access, Treatment) target A11 expects that by March 2013, 90% of people who need help with their drug and/ or alcohol problem will wait no longer than three weeks for treatment.

Information about waiting times is collected using the Drug and Alcohol Treatment Waiting Times Database which went live across Scotland on 1 April 2011. This database collects information about the length of time people wait for specialist drug and/or alcohol treatment after they have been referred to treatment services in Scotland.

Prior to the introduction of the new database, information was only collected on drug treatment waiting times. The waits were measured in two stages (the wait from referral received to the date of assessment offered, and the wait from a care plan being agreed to the date of treatment offered). This means it is not possible to directly compare drug waiting times from the new Drug and Alcohol Treatment Waiting Times Database with those recorded under the former Drug Treatment Waiting Times Information Framework.

The Drug and Alcohol Treatment Waiting Times Database offers several advantages over the earlier system, including:

- recording both drug and alcohol waiting times
- providing information on the full wait from referral to treatment, in line with the HEAT target
- reporting for each of the 30 Alcohol and Drug Partnerships, as well as by Health Board and nationally
- collecting information on when clients are unavailable, when they could not or did not attend the appointments offered to them, and when first treatment actually took place
- allowing services to directly submit data to ISD securely over the web, with built-in data validation to help ensure quality

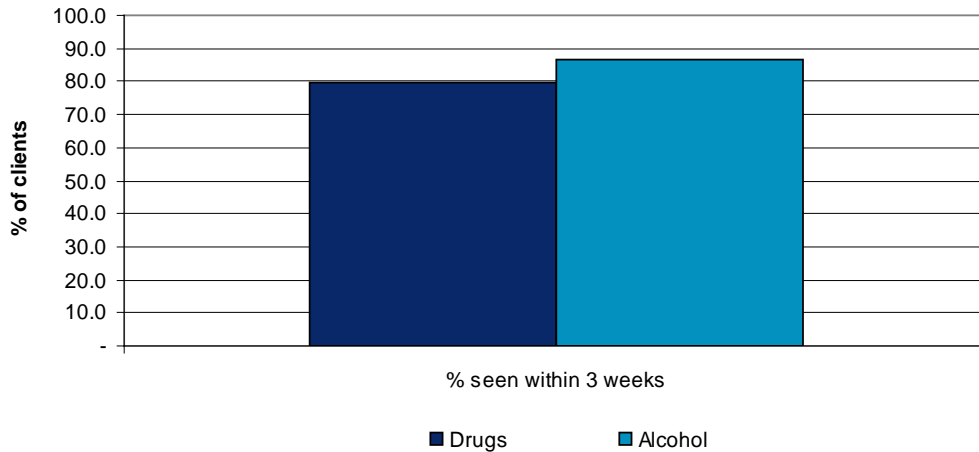
This is the second reporting period for the new system which presents waiting times data for the full client journey for both drugs and alcohol. Trend data for drugs prior to April 2011 is not published as the new data is not comparable with data from the old system.

A minor change to the way waiting times is calculated has been made since the last publication affecting approximately 3% of records. The April – June data has been updated to reflect this. More details on the changes can be found [here](#).

## Key points

- In July - September 2011, of the 10,718 drug and/or alcohol clients who started their first treatment 84% had waited 3 weeks or less. This represents an increase of approximately 1% on the previous quarter.

Completed waits for Referral to Treatment, Scotland,  
July - September 2011



- Approximately 87% of the 7,088 clients who started alcohol treatment between July and September 2011 had waited 3 weeks or less. This represents an increase of approximately 2% on the previous quarter.
- Approximately 80% of the 3,630 clients who attended an appointment for drug treatment waited 3 weeks or less. This is inline with the percentage for the previous quarter.
- Of those who were still waiting to start drug or alcohol treatment (3,963 clients), approximately 10% had waited more than 6 weeks at the end of September 2011. This is inline with the percentage for the previous quarter.

## Results and Commentary

### Interpreting the data

Caution is recommended when interpreting these statistics. The number of services submitting data varies significantly from area to area and within areas across the data collection period.

It should also be noted that there is a wide range of demand for substance misuse services across Scotland, and to meet this demand appropriately, services are tailored to local needs. In some Alcohol and Drug Partnership (ADP) areas, the impact of a single specialised service – for example, a crisis management centre – may dramatically alter the distribution of waiting times. Consequently, comparisons of data across Quarters, Health Boards and ADPs may be misleading and should be treated with caution.

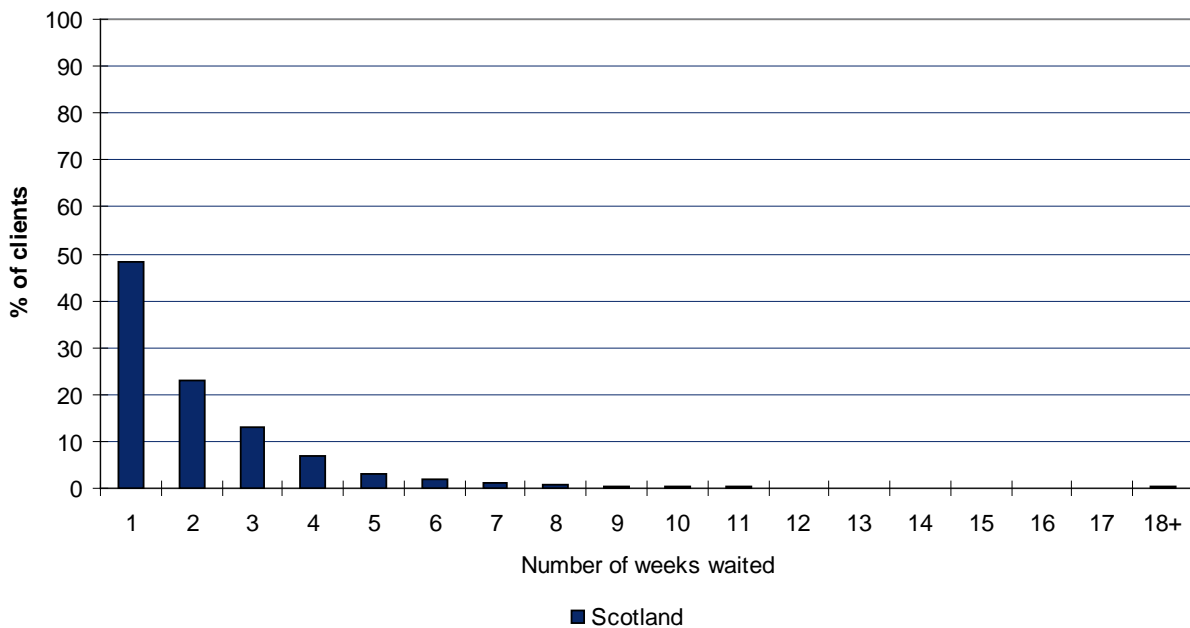
The tables include small numbers for some ADPs and Health Boards; caution is therefore recommended when interpreting differences in percentages.

Data is extracted from the new web-based system and is a snapshot of what is on the system at that time. Data for previous quarters has been revised, and data for the most recent quarter is provisional and as such is subject to revisions in future publications. See table 9 for information on compliance across Scotland.

### Drug and Alcohol Treatment Waiting times

- In July - September 2011, of the 10,718 drug and/or alcohol clients who started their first treatment almost half (48%) had waited one week or less and 84% had waited 3 weeks or less (Table 3).

Distribution of completed waits for Scotland Alcohol and Drugs, clients seen in quarter ending 30th September 2011



- Of those who were still waiting to start drug or alcohol treatment (3,963 clients), approximately 10% had waited more than 6 weeks at the end of September 2011 (Table 6).

## Alcohol Treatment Waiting Times

In July – September 2011, of the 7,088 clients who began alcohol treatment, approximately 87% waited 3 weeks or less (Table 3).

- 90% of clients who started treatment in July – September 2011 waited 25 days or less (Table 1).
- All NHS Boards except, NHS Grampian, NHS Highland, NHS Lothian and NHS Tayside had at least 80% of clients who started alcohol treatment waiting 3 weeks or less (Table 3).

Of those who were still waiting to start alcohol treatment, approximately 9% had waited more than 6 weeks at the end of September 2011 (Table 6).

- All NHS Boards in Scotland except NHS Lothian and NHS Tayside had at least 80% of clients with ongoing waits for alcohol treatment of 6 weeks or less (Table 6).

8,097 alcohol treatments were started (this includes all treatments received, not just first treatment as in tables 1-6) in Scotland in July – September 2011 (Table 7).

- Structured preparatory and motivational intervention was the most frequently accessed alcohol treatment (3, 996 treatments between July – September 2011).
- Community based support and/ or rehabilitation was also a common alcohol treatment with 3,175 treatments started in July – September 2011.

## Drug Treatment Waiting Times

In July – September, of the 3,630 clients who began drug treatment, approximately 80% of clients waited 3 weeks or less (Table 3).

- 90% of clients who started treatment in July - September 2011 waited 32 days or less (Table 1).
- All NHS Boards except NHS Ayrshire & Arran, NHS Borders, NHS Grampian, NHS Lothian and NHS Tayside had at least 80% of clients who started drug treatment waiting 3 weeks or less (Table 3).

Of those who were still waiting to start drug treatment, approximately 13% had waited more than 6 weeks at the end of September 2011 (Table 6).

- All NHS Boards in Scotland except NHS Tayside had at least 80% of clients with ongoing waits for drug treatment of 6 weeks or less (Table 6).

During July – September 2011 there were 4,314 drug treatments started (this includes all treatments received, not just first treatment as in tables 1-6) in Scotland (Table 7).

- Structured preparatory and motivational intervention was the most frequently accessed drug treatment (1,843 treatments between July – September 2011).
- Community based support and/ or rehabilitation was also a common drug treatment with 1,465 treatments started in July – September 2011.

## **ADP compliance**

Table 9 shows that the number of services returning data within each ADP varies. It is important to take account of this information when interpreting data.

ADPs are asked to encourage services to submit data. ISD will continue to work closely with ADPs to ensure that data on the web system is as up to date as possible for future quarterly extracts.

## Glossary

ADAT Alcohol and Drug Action Team

ADP Alcohol and Drug Partnership

HEAT Health improvement, Efficiency, Access, Treatment

ISD Information Services Division

For more information on treatment types see [HEAT A11: Updated Drug and Alcohol Treatment Types](#)

## List of Tables

Table No.	Name	Time period	File & size
1	<a href="#">July - September 2011 DATWT Tables</a>	Jul – Sept 2011	Excel [611kb]

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## Further Information

Further information can be found on the [ISD website](#)

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## Appendix

### A1 – Background Information

The [National Drug Waiting Times Information Framework](#) was introduced in April 2004. This included guidance and definitions on data items to be collected for drug waiting times. The aim of the framework was to give Alcohol and Drug Action Teams (ADATs) a consistent structure for local monitoring of treatment services.

In February 2007, ISD provided ADATs with a revised data collection system that enabled ADATs to produce a wider range of reports and also provided the facility for ADATs to monitor data quality more easily.

Operational structures changed in October 2009, when the 22 ADATs were dissolved and replaced by 30 Alcohol and Drug Partnerships (ADPs). The Waiting Times Framework was designed to function at ADAT level.

In April 2011 a new Drug and Alcohol Treatment Waiting Times Database went live across Scotland. This is the first time that data on alcohol as well as drug treatments is recorded nationally, and the first time information is available on the full client journey from assessment to treatment. The new database also facilitates reporting at ADP level.

The benefits of the new database are:

- ADPs will have more accurate waiting times information to monitor equity of access for drug and alcohol clients across their local area.
- ADPs can use this information to hold meaningful, informed discussions with agencies about blockages in the system.
- ADPs will be able to identify treatment 'types' that have the longest wait.
- ADPs will be able to monitor levels of non-attendance and long waits and use this information for service redesign.
- ADPs can monitor the data themselves, producing reports from the system to show their progress towards the HEAT target, services with long waits, and records which have not been updated.
- ADPs can measure the full wait from Referral to Treatment in one stage.
- The new database records periods of unavailability so a service is not penalised if, for example, a client is on holiday, or in prison.
- Nine different treatment 'types' are recorded giving a more specific detailed breakdown of the kind of treatments being accessed by clients.

More information: <http://www.drugmisuse.isdscotland.org/wtpilot/waiting.htm>

**A2 – Publication Metadata (including revisions details)**

<b>Metadata Indicator</b>	<b>Description</b>
Publication title	Drug and Alcohol Treatment Waiting Times Information Framework Report July to September 2011
Description	Data is presented on the number of clients seen and the length of time they waited to be seen for drug or alcohol treatment interventions. Data is shown by Health Board and Alcohol and Drug Partnership area.
Theme	Health and Social Care
Topic	Access and Waiting Times
Format	PDF report with Excel tables
Data source(s)	Extract taken from the national Drugs and Alcohol Treatment Waiting Times Database
Date that data is acquired	Monday 31 <sup>st</sup> October 2011
Release date	Tuesday 20 <sup>th</sup> December 2011
Frequency	Quarterly
Timeframe of data and timeliness	The timeframe for this publication is July - September 2011. The publication is considered timely as there have been no delays.
Continuity of data	This is the second publication of data from the new Drug and Alcohol Treatment Waiting Times Database. It is not comparable with data previously published from the old Drug Waiting Times Framework
Revisions Statement	Planned Revisions are a feature of this publications release: historic data will be revised.
Revisions relevant to this publication	<p>Historic data has been revised to account for waiting times records which are belatedly updated on the web system and/or services which were previously not included for data quality reasons.</p> <p>A minor change to the way waiting times is calculated has been made since the last publication. This meant that approximately 3% of clients from the April to June publication would have experienced a longer wait than was reported. The April to June data has been updated to reflect this. Please see our <a href="#">website</a> for more details.</p>
Concepts and definitions	<a href="http://www.drugmisuse.isdscotland.org/wtpilot/waiting.htm">http://www.drugmisuse.isdscotland.org/wtpilot/waiting.htm</a>
Relevance and key uses of the statistics	Key uses of Drug and Alcohol Treatment Waiting Times Information include: performance management, monitoring against the HEAT A11 target and service planning.
Accuracy	The new Alcohol and Drug Treatment Waiting Times Database has strong inbuilt validation. It also allows ISD to monitor data quality throughout the quarter, and for ADPs and services to run reports on their data to highlight any problems which can then be amended.
Completeness	This quarter there was 97% compliance from the services.
Comparability	Not comparable outwith Scotland
Accessibility	It is the policy of ISD Scotland to make its web sites and products accessible according to published guidelines. See

	attached link for further details: <a href="http://www.isdscotland.org/About-ISD/Accessibility/">http://www.isdscotland.org/About-ISD/Accessibility/</a>
Coherence and clarity	The report is available as a PDF file with tables clearly linked for ease of use.
Value type and unit of measure	Percentage of clients who have started treatment or number of clients still waiting to start treatment.
Disclosure	There is considered to be a low risk of disclosure.
Official Statistics designation	Official Statistics
Official Statistics	Awaiting assessment by UK Statistics Authority
Last published	27th September 2011
Next published	
Date of first publication	December 2004
Help email	<a href="mailto:calum.macdonald@nhs.net">calum.macdonald@nhs.net</a>
Date form completed	25 <sup>th</sup> November 2010

## **A3 – Early Access details (including Pre-Release Access)**

### **Pre-Release Access**

Under terms of the "Pre-Release Access to Official Statistics (Scotland) Order 2008", ISD are obliged to publish information on those receiving Pre-Release Access ("Pre-Release Access" refers to statistics in their final form prior to publication). The standard maximum Pre-Release Access is five working days. Shown below are details of those receiving standard Pre-Release Access and, separately, those receiving extended Pre-Release Access.

#### **Standard Pre-Release Access:**

Scottish Government Health Department  
NHS Board Chief Executives  
NHS Board Communication leads

#### **Extended Pre-Release Access**

Extended Pre-Release Access of 8 working days is given to a small number of named individuals in the Scottish Government Health Department (Analytical Services Division). This Pre-Release Access is for the sole purpose of enabling that department to gain an understanding of the statistics prior to briefing others in Scottish Government (during the period of standard Pre-Release Access).

Scottish Government Health Department (Analytical Services Division)  
Scottish Government Justice Department (Analytical Services Division)

#### **Early Access for Management Information**

These statistics will also have been made available to those who needed access to 'management information', ie as part of the delivery of health and care:

Scottish Government Drug Policy Unit  
Scottish Government Alcohol Policy Unit

#### **Early Access for Quality Assurance**

These statistics will also have been made available to those who needed access to help quality assure the publication:

Alcohol and Drug Partnership Coordinators