Guidance on Collecting Waiting Times Data

Who should data be collected on?

Waiting times data should be collected on any problem drug user who is attending the service either for the first time ever or who has previously attended the service but has been discharged.

When should data be collected?

Waiting times data should be recorded by agencies on an on-going basis. It is essential that the key data items are recorded routinely and that individual client records are kept up to date. It is of particular importance that the discharge/referral-on date is entered as soon as it is agreed that the client is no longer to attend the service. This will ensure that clients not waiting for assessment or treatment are excluded from the waiting times statistics.

Filling out the Excel data collection template

Detailed definitions of the data items to be collected can be found in the National Waiting Times Information Framework document. The table below outlines the main points to take into consideration when collecting and entering each of the data items.

Data Item	**Validation**
Service ID	Should be either the name of the agency or the agency code used when returning SMR25 forms If a client has been referred for alcohol problems add “- A” to the service ID.
Client ID	Unique number, name or code used to track the client. For confidentiality purposes this should not be the clients full name or any other information that would enable the DAT to identify the individual.
Date referral received / Date of first contact	Must be a valid date in the format dd/mm/yyyy
First appointment date offered for assessment	Must be a valid date in the format dd/mm/yyyy Must be later than or the same as date referral received / date of first contact
Date care plan is agreed / Date decision on treatment is made	Must be a valid date in the format dd/mm/yyyy Must be later than or the same as date referral received / first contact AND later than or the same as first appointment date offered for assessment
First treatment – Treatment required	Must be a single digit number from the following list: 1 – Structured preparatory and motivational intervention 2 – Prescribed drug treatment 3 – Community based support and/or rehabilitation

	4 – Residential detoxification and/or rehabilitation
First treatment – First appointment date offered	Must be a valid date in the format dd/mm/yyyy Must be later than or the same as date care plan is agreed / decision on treatment is made
Second treatment – Date client ready for treatment	Must be a valid date in the format dd/mm/yyyy Must be later than or the same as date care plan is agreed / decision on treatment is made
Second treatment – Treatment required	Must be a single digit number from the following list: 1 – Structured preparatory and motivational intervention 2 – Prescribed drug treatment 3 – Community based support and/or rehabilitation 4 – Residential detoxification and/or rehabilitation
Second treatment – first appointment date offered	Must be a valid date in the format dd/mm/yyyy Must be later than or the same as date care plan is agreed / decision on treatment is made AND later than or the same as first appointment date offered for first treatment
Date of discharge / referral on	Must be a valid date in the format dd/mm/yyyy Must be later than all other dates entered for the client or the same as the last date entered for the client
Discharge code	Must be a single digit number from the following list: 1 – Planned 2 – Unplanned 3 - Disciplinary

Please note: as the service ID and client ID will be used to match the updated data with the existing client records these two data items cannot be changed once they have been entered as this will result in duplicate records and inaccurate waiting times.

Information for those agencies not using the excel template

If you plan to extract waiting times data from an existing data collection or patient administration system the above formatting and validation rules still apply. Additionally, in order to ensure that the data can be fed into the data collation system at your local DAT, the extract should be created in csv (comma separated) file format with the columns of data appearing in the same order as they do in the Excel template.

What should be sent to the DAT?

Each month a copy of the entire Excel spreadsheet should be sent to the local DAT. This data will then be fed into their data collation system and client records will be updated with any activity that has occurred during the preceding month. If there are any errors in the data (see above for validation checks) the DAT will contact the agency with details of the records requiring attention. These records must be corrected on the data collection template at the agency and the data re-extracted and forwarded to the DAT. This is to ensure that the data held by the agency is valid and up-to-date and that old errors are not reloaded onto the DAT system each month.

When should the data be sent to the DAT?

Data should be sent to the local DAT on a monthly basis no later than 2 weeks after the end of the month in question. For example: waiting times data for the period 1 June 2007 to 30 June 2007 should be sent to the DAT no later than 13 July 2007.