

Dear

ATISN 26878 – Waiting Times

Thank you for your request to Welsh Government for information under the Freedom of Information Act (2000) received on 10 April 2026 relating to waiting times. You have requested the following.

In relation to NHS waiting time targets:

1. NHS performance targets

A chronological list of all formal NHS Wales performance targets set or used by Welsh Government between January 2010 and the most recent available recorded point (preferably up to December 2024) relating to:

- a. referral-to-treatment waiting times;*
- b. diagnostic waiting times;*
- c. emergency department (A&E) waiting times;*
- d. ambulance response times.*

For each target, please include:

- date introduced;*
- target level/threshold;*
- and, where applicable, date of revision, replacement, or withdrawal.*

2. Target performance and failure analysis

Final versions of any briefing papers, ministerial submissions, or risk assessments produced between 2010 and the most recent available recorded point (preferably up to December 2024) that explicitly address:

- failure to meet NHS Wales waiting time targets, or*
 - risk of failure to meet those targets,*
- and which were submitted to ministers or senior Welsh Government officials*

3. Formal review of key targets

Any ministerial advice, submissions, or formal recommendations produced between 2010 and the most recent available recorded point (preferably up to December 2024) in which:

- the 95% four-hour A&E target,*
 - the 26-week referral-to-treatment target,*
 - or equivalent NHS Wales waiting time targets,*
- were formally considered for revision, replacement, abandonment, or reframing.*

Our Response

1. NHS Wales performance targets are set by Welsh Government on an annual, financial year basis (April to March) and reflect the strategic priorities as set out in the NHS Wales

Planning Framework ([NHS Wales planning frameworks | GOV.WALES](#)). The NHS Performance Framework (previously called NHS Delivery Framework / Annual Operating Framework) sets out how NHS organisations are measured, monitored, and held accountable to deliver high-quality, equitable, and efficient healthcare services across Wales.

The attached document provides the measures and targets, from 2010/11 to 2024/25, relating to:

- a. referral-to-treatment waiting times;
- b. diagnostic waiting times;
- c. emergency department (A&E) waiting times;
- d. ambulance response times.

Where possible, we have included a link to the published annual framework for information.

2. We can confirm that Welsh Government holds some of the information that is captured by part 2 of your request. However, from my preliminary assessment I estimate that it will cost more than the appropriate limit set out in the Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004 to answer your requests.

The appropriate limit specified for central government is £600. This represents the estimated cost of it taking over 24 hours of time to determine whether we hold the information and to thereafter locate, retrieve and extract it.

To provide you with the information it would require searches of our electronic filing system to identify relevant documents and manually review to consider whether they are wholly or partially within scope of your request and extract relevant information spanning a 14 year time period of 2010-2024.

As part of our preliminary assessment a search was undertaken of appropriate briefings within a smaller timeframe to determine how long it would take to consider the full request. It was estimated it would take over approximately 112 hours to identify the relevant information and extract it.

Therefore, the estimated calculation to gather the information for your request is as follows:

Calculation:

Documents Located: Average of 60 documents a year x 14 years = 840 documents

Average time take to review document = 8 minutes X 840 = 6,720 divide by 60 = 112 hours

Consequently, after considering the regulations and applying the timescales for review, I have decided not to provide you with the information you have requested.

You may wish to refine your requests by being more specific about what information you particularly wish to obtain and include any dates or period of time relevant to the information required. It may help you to refine any future requests if you were to consider what it is you are looking for. Are there any specific questions you want an answer to? Is there any specific piece of information you are looking for? What is it you want to understand?

If you can identify what it is you are looking for, then ask for that information. By doing this, it would make it easier for our policy teams to identify what you are looking for and to provide a more focused response.

If you do refine your request in this way, this will be treated as a new request.

3. The tables and information provided for question one highlight where temporary changes have been made to NHS key targets.

Next Steps

If you are dissatisfied with the Welsh Government's handling of your request, you can ask for an internal review within 40 working days of the date of this response. Requests for an internal review should be addressed to the Welsh Government's Freedom of Information Officer at:

Information Rights Unit
Welsh Government
Cathays Park
Cardiff
CF10 3NQ
or Email: Freedom.ofinformation@gov.wales

Please remember to quote the ATISN reference number above.

You also have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

However, please note that the Commissioner will not normally investigate a complaint until it has been through our own internal review process.

Yours sincerely,