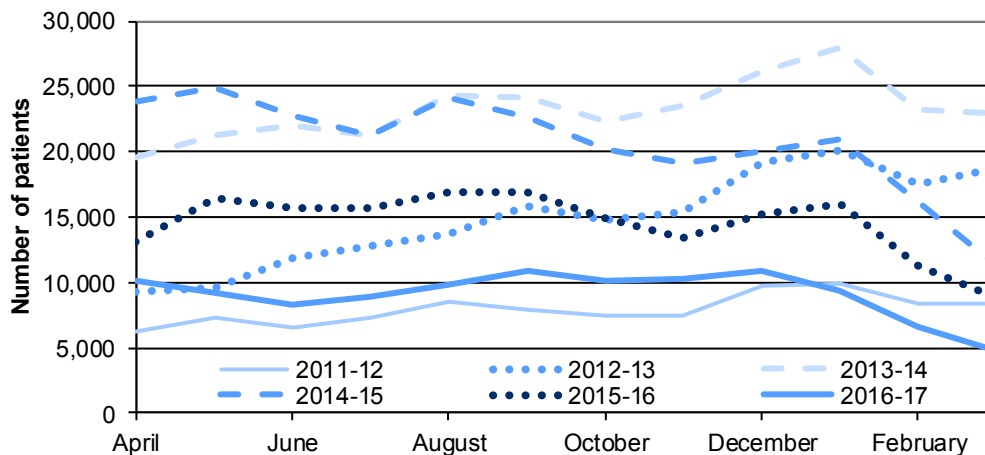




NHS Wales diagnostic and therapy services waiting times: 2016-17

22 June 2017
SFR 66/2017

Chart 1: Number of patients waiting over 8 weeks for diagnostic services by financial year, 2011-12 onwards



Source: Diagnostic and therapy services waiting times, NHS Wales Informatics Service (NWIS)

Chart 1 shows the number of patients waiting over 8 weeks for diagnostic services by financial year, from 2011-12 until 2016-17:

- Overall, 2016-17 has been the second best year shown on the chart in terms of numbers waiting over target, with 2011-12 being the best.
- The first three years shown on the chart show an overall increase through the year, while in recent years the number has declined as the year progresses.
- By the end of the year, the majority of waits over 8 weeks were for diagnostic endoscopy patients at Cardiff and Vale and Aneurin Bevan University Health Boards.

Information on the number of patients waiting over 14 weeks for therapy services is presented in [Chart 9](#):

- The number has remained relatively stable over 2016-17, with numbers remaining between 2,200 and 2,900. The majority of these waits were at Hywel Dda University Health Board (66.3 per cent in March 2017).

Whilst data for diagnostic and therapy waiting times are available back to 2005 on [StatsWales](#), this release focuses on October 2009 onwards as that is when the current health boards came into existence.

About this release

The NHS Outcomes Framework 2016-17 (released in [WHC \(2016\) 17](#)) is used to measure delivery throughout 2016-17. There are operational standards for maximum waiting times for access to diagnostic and therapy services. The maximum wait for access to specified diagnostic tests is 8 weeks and for specified therapy services is 14 weeks. The main target about waiting time to treatment for the NHS in Wales is covered by the referral to treatment time. Monitoring information related to this target is published in a separate annual release, [Referral to Treatment Times](#).

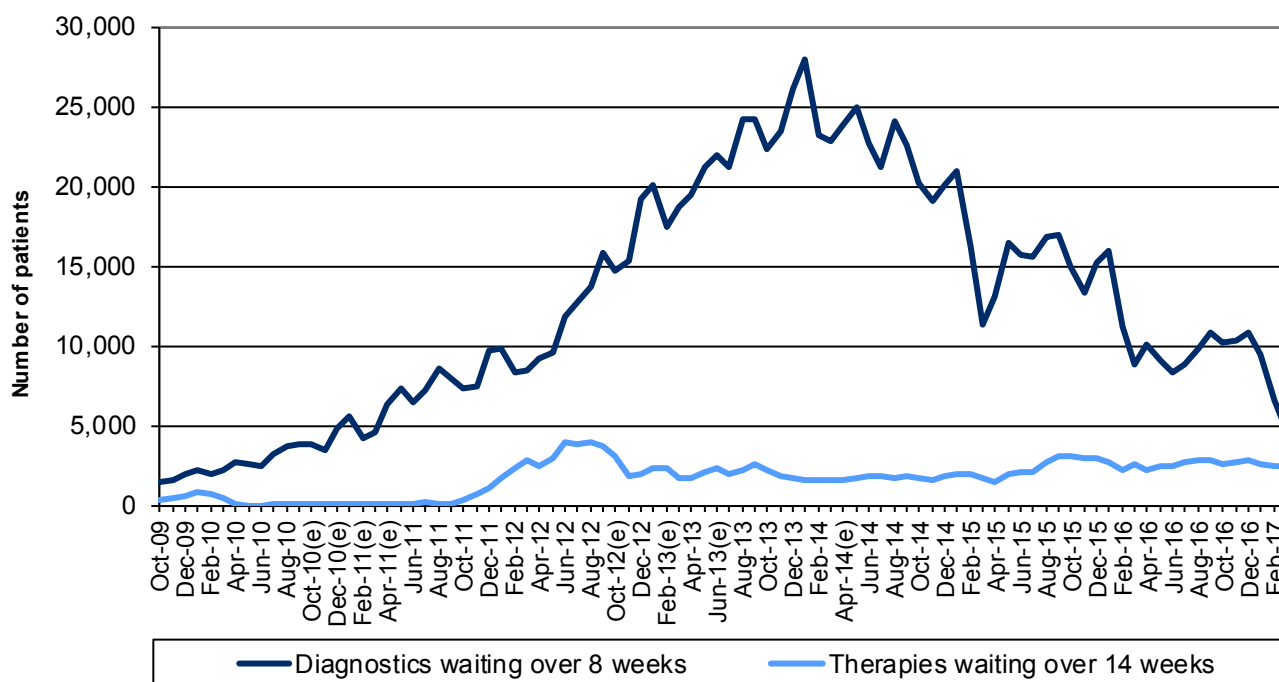
In this release

Diagnostic services	5
Therapy services	13
Key quality information	22

Contents

Chart 1 : Number of patients waiting over 8 weeks for diagnostic services by financial year, 2011-12 onwards	1
Chart 2 : Number of patients waiting over standard times for diagnostic and therapy services, October 2009 onwards	3
Chart 3 : Median waits for specified diagnostic and therapy services, October 2009 onwards	4
Diagnostic services	5
Table 1 : Patients waiting and median waiting times for diagnostic services, 2016-17	5
Chart 4 : Median waiting times for diagnostic services by financial year, 2011-12 onwards	6
Table 2 : Number of patients waiting over 8 weeks by specified diagnostic service, 2016-17	7
Chart 5 : Number of patients waiting over 8 weeks by specified diagnostic service, October 2009 onwards	8
Charts 6(a)-(h) : Median waiting times for specified diagnostic services, 2016-17	9
Table 3 : Number of patients waiting over 8 weeks for specified diagnostic services by area of provider, 2016-17	10
Chart 7 : Number of patients waiting over 8 weeks for diagnostic services by area of provider, October 2009 onwards	11
Charts 8(a)-(h) : Median waiting times for diagnostic services by area of provider	12
Therapy services	13
Chart 9 : Number of patients waiting over 14 weeks for therapy services by financial year, 2011-12 onwards	13
Table 4 : Patients waiting and median waiting times for therapy services, 2016-17	14
Chart 10 : Median waiting times for therapy services by financial year, 2011-12 onwards	15
Table 5 : Number of patients waiting over 8 weeks by specified therapy service, 2016-17	16
Chart 11 : Number of patients waiting over 14 weeks by specified therapy service, October 2009 onwards	17
Charts 12(a)-(h) : Median waiting times for specified therapy services, 2016-17	18
Table 6 : Number of patients waiting over 14 weeks for therapy services by area of provider, 2016-17	19
Chart 13 : Number of patients waiting over 14 weeks for therapy services by area of provider, October 2009 onwards	20
Charts 14(a)-(h) : Median waiting times for therapy services by area of provider	21
Key quality information :	22

Chart 2: Number of patients waiting over standard times for diagnostic and therapy services, October 2009 onwards



Source: Diagnostic and therapy services waiting times, NHS Wales Informatics Service (NWIS)

(e) Figures include a known estimate. See [Key Quality Information](#) for further details

Chart 2 shows the number of patients waiting over standard times for diagnostic and therapy services from October 2009 onwards.

Diagnostic services:

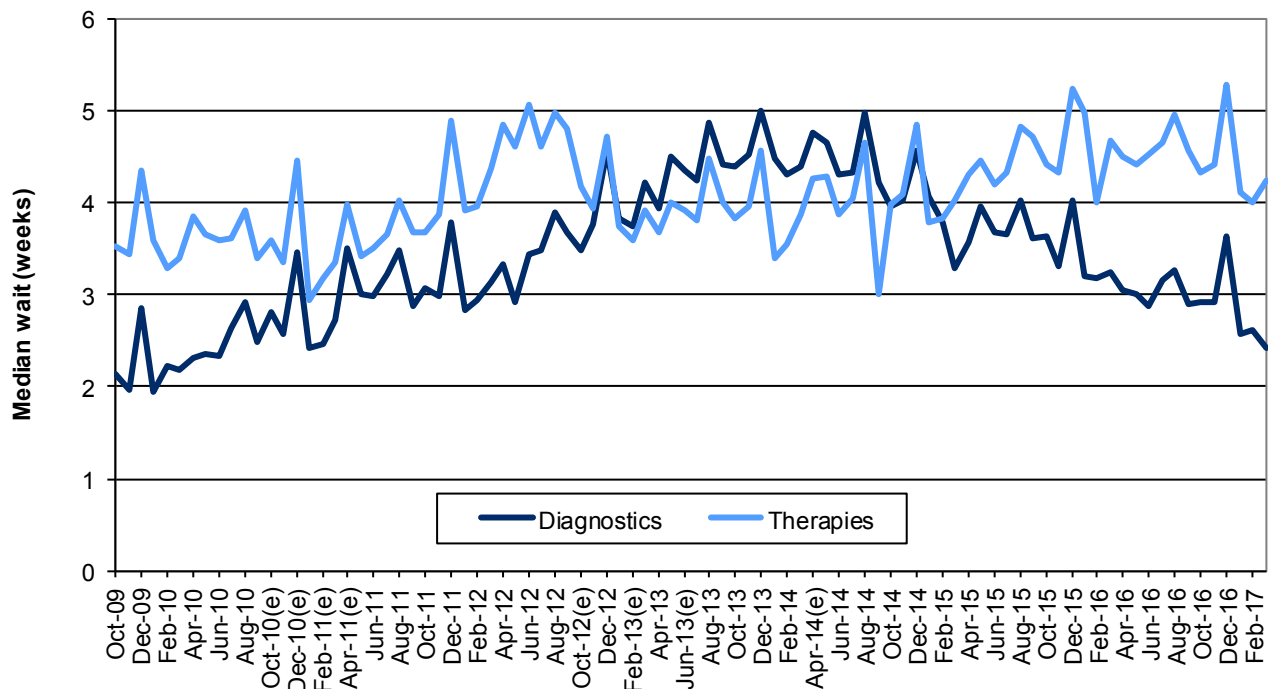
- Between October 2009 and January 2014, the number of patients waiting more than 8 weeks for diagnostic services increased with the figures peaking at 27,998. Since then there has been an overall decrease, with 4,741 waiting over 8 weeks in March 2017, the lowest since March 2011.
- The increase seen between October 2009 and January 2014 was mainly down to an increase in radiology waits over 8 weeks at Aneurin Bevan University Health Board. However, by 2016-17 the majority of waits over 8 weeks were for diagnostic endoscopy.

Therapy services:

- The number of patients waiting more than 14 weeks for therapy services remained under 1,000 from October 2009 until November 2011 but rose to a peak of 4,781 in June 2012. From November 2012 to March 2017 it remained between approximately 2,000 and 3,000.
- The small peak in January 2010 was down to an increase in podiatry waits at Aneurin Bevan, while the increase between June 2011 and June 2012 was primarily down to longer waits for physiotherapy services at several health boards.

The following chart presents information on the median waiting times. The median time is the middle time when all waits are ordered from shortest wait to longest, so a half of all patients wait this time or less. It is commonly used in preference to the mean as it is less susceptible to extreme values than the mean.

Chart 3: Median waiting times for diagnostic and therapy services, October 2009 onwards



Source: Diagnostic and therapy services waiting times, NHS Wales Informatics Service (NWIS)

(e) Figures include a known estimate. See [Key Quality Information](#) for further details

Chart 3 shows the trend of median waits for diagnostic and therapy services since October 2009.

- The median for diagnostic services and the median for therapy services both rose from October 2009 to June 2012, at which point the median for therapies began to decline while the median for diagnostics continued to increase until December 2013. Around the middle of 2014, the median for diagnostics began to decline, while the median for therapies began to increase again.
- The median for diagnostic services rose above therapy services in January 2013 and remained above until October 2014, although diagnostics were briefly above therapies again in January 2015.
- The median for diagnostic services was highest in December 2013, while it was highest for therapy services in December 2016.

Diagnostic services

Table 1: Patients waiting and median waiting times for diagnostic services, 2016-17

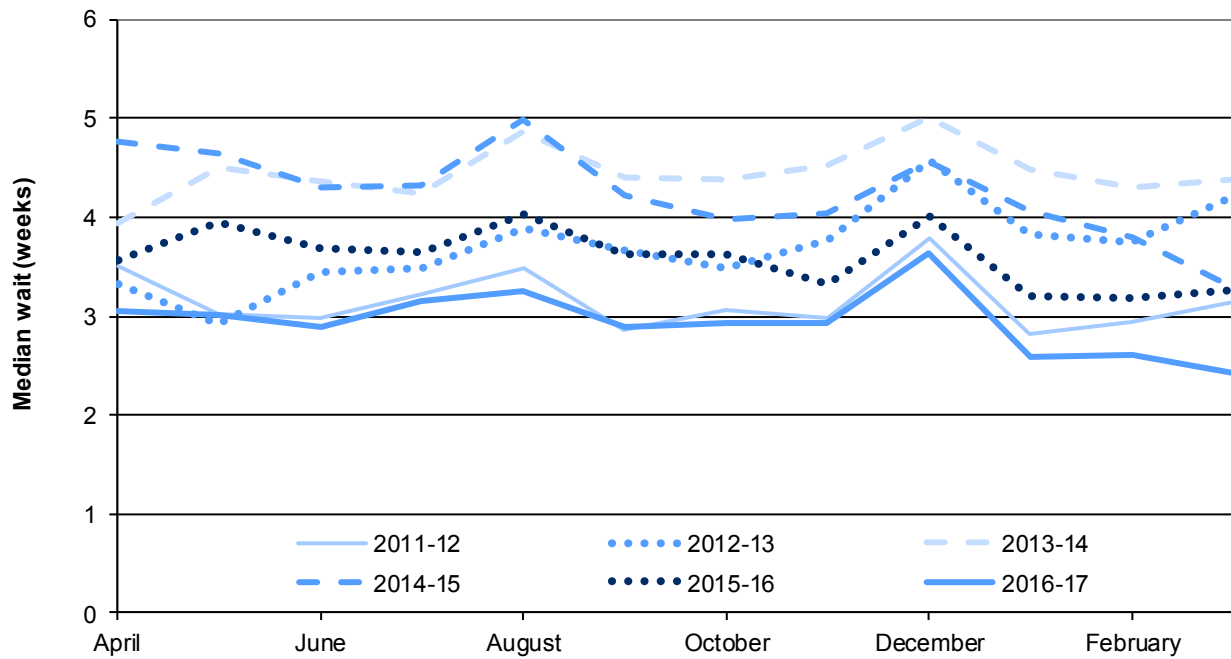
Month	Patients waiting			Percentage over 8 weeks	Median waiting time
	Total	Less than 8 weeks	8 weeks and over		
Apr-16	63,600	53,459	10,141	15.9	3.1
May-16	66,402	57,268	9,134	13.8	3.0
Jun-16	65,704	57,359	8,345	12.7	2.9
Jul-16	65,980	57,154	8,826	13.4	3.1
Aug-16	65,033	55,227	9,806	15.1	3.3
Sep-16	66,632	55,811	10,821	16.2	2.9
Oct-16	66,547	56,371	10,176	15.3	2.9
Nov-16	64,421	54,105	10,316	16.0	2.9
Dec-16	64,028	53,200	10,828	16.9	3.6
Jan-17	61,495	52,081	9,414	15.3	2.6
Feb-17	59,313	52,688	6,625	11.2	2.6
Mar-17	58,399	53,658	4,741	8.1	2.4

Source: Diagnostic and therapy services waiting times, NHS Wales Informatics Service (NWIS)

Table 1 shows the numbers and percentages of patients waiting in relation to the standard time (8 weeks) and the median waits for diagnostic services. The table shows that in 2016-17:

- The highest number of patients waiting more than 8 weeks occurred in December 2016, at which point the figure went down every month before reaching a low of 4,741 in March 2017.
- The median follows a similar pattern to the number waiting over 8 weeks, peaking in December before reaching its lowest point in March

Chart 4: Median waiting times for diagnostic services by financial year, 2011-12 onwards



Source: Diagnostic and therapy services waiting times, NHS Wales Informatics Service (NWIS)

Chart 4 shows the median waiting time for diagnostic services by financial year, 2011-12 onwards.

The chart shows that:

- The medians tend to be highest in December each year, with smaller peaks also visible in August.
- Despite 2011-12 having the best performance overall against the 8 week standard (see [Chart 1](#)), 2016-17 had the shortest median wait.

Table 2: Number of patients waiting over 8 weeks by specified diagnostic service, 2016-17

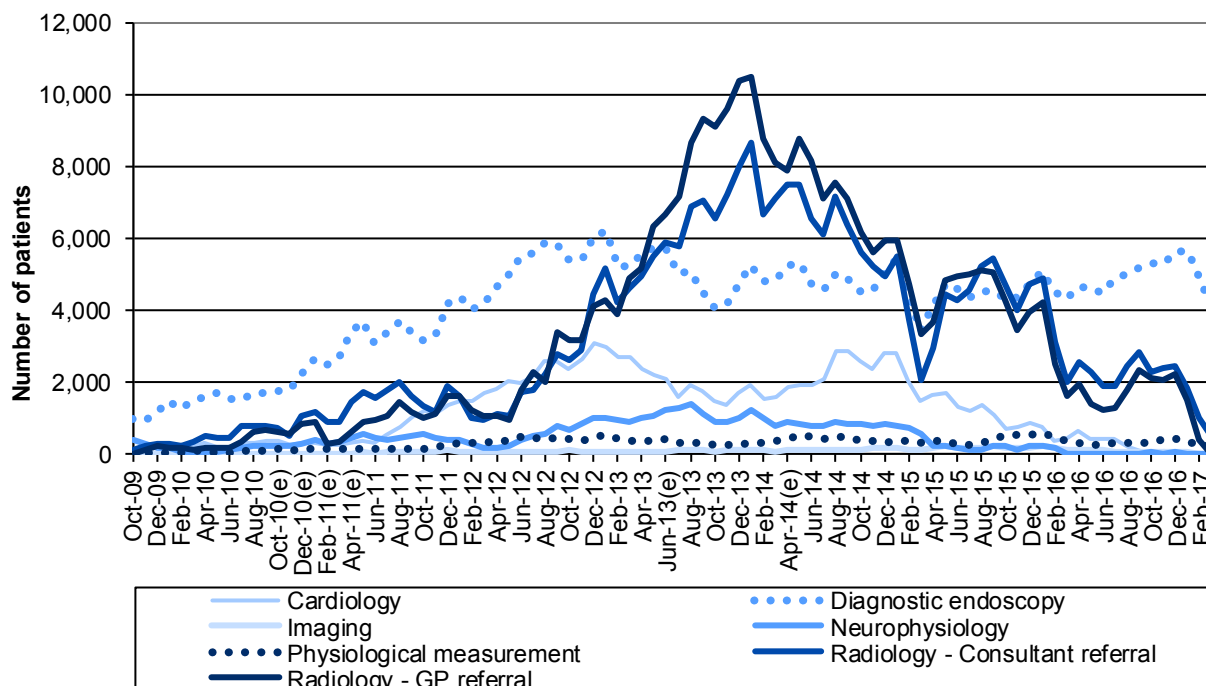
	Service							All services
	Cardiology	Diagnostic endoscopy	Imaging	Neurophysiology	Physiological measurement	Radiology - Consultant referral	Radiology - GP referral	
Monthly charts (b)								
Apr-16	616	4,658	101	13	289	2,538	1,926	10,141
May-16	430	4,665	111	14	252	2,256	1,406	9,134
Jun-16	423	4,488	90	7	255	1,863	1,219	8,345
Jul-16	404	4,847	58	8	309	1,915	1,285	8,826
Aug-16	185	5,011	50	16	328	2,449	1,767	9,806
Sep-16	60	5,188	58	17	320	2,843	2,335	10,821
Oct-16	49	5,299	51	36	322	2,294	2,125	10,176
Nov-16	76	5,318	36	12	415	2,403	2,056	10,316
Dec-16	49	5,659	51	34	404	2,428	2,203	10,828
Jan-17	30	5,655	50	8	326	1,847	1,498	9,414
Feb-17	29	4,834	21	13	294	1,015	419	6,625
Mar-17	2	4,030	5	2	198	501	3	4,741

Source: Diagnostic and therapy services waiting times, NHS Wales Informatics Service (NWIS)

(b) The vertical axis for the charts is the same for each service, but the all services chart uses a different scale
Table 2 shows the number of patients waiting over 8 weeks by specified diagnostic service. The table shows that in 2016-17:

- The number of patients waiting over 8 weeks for diagnostic services declined for all services over the year. Cardiology and imaging services declined gradually over the year, while most other services did not start to fall until January.
- Diagnostic endoscopy accounted for 45.9 per cent of waits over 8 weeks in April 2016. By the end of the year, this increased to 85.0 per cent.
- The lowest point for all services occurred in March, reflecting the overall low shown in [Table 1](#).
- The overall drop over the last few months of the year was primarily down to the large drop in radiology patients waiting over 8 weeks (GP and consultant referral) at Cwm Taf University Health board. In fact, the pattern for radiology patients closely resembles the pattern for all services across the whole year. This is due to radiology typically accounting for around 65 per cent of all patients waiting.

Chart 5: Number of patients waiting over 8 weeks by specified diagnostic service, October 2009 onwards



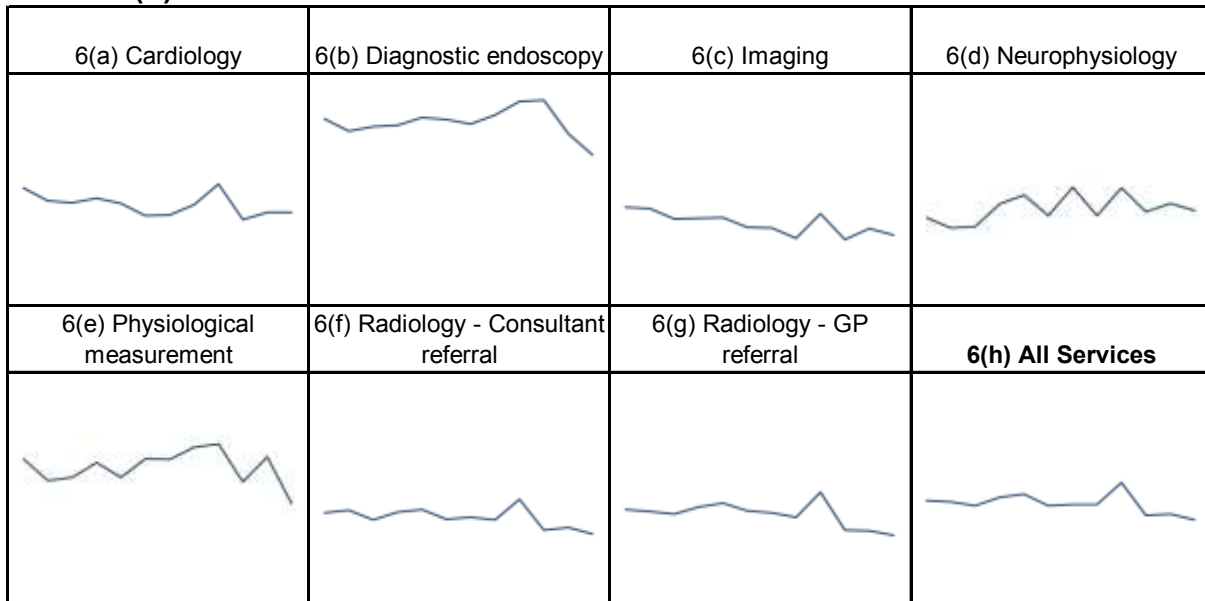
Source: Diagnostic and therapy services waiting times, NHS Wales Informatics Service (NWIS)

(e) Figures include a known estimate. See [Key Quality Information](#) for further details

Chart 5 shows the trend of patients waiting over 8 weeks by specified diagnostic service.

- All services increased in numbers of patients waiting over the target time between October 2009 and January 2014, which was the peak month for both radiology (GP referral) and radiology (consultant referral). This was also the peak month overall, as shown in [Chart 2](#). Since then there has been a decrease in this number for most services although diagnostic endoscopy figures have remained between around 4,000 and 6,000.
- It can be seen that the considerable drops in 2016-17 for cardiology and radiology services shown in [Table 2](#) were part of a long term decline for these services.

Charts 6(a)-(h): Median waiting times by month for specified diagnostic services, 2016-17 (b)



Source: Diagnostic and therapy services waiting times, NHS Wales Informatics Service (NWIS)

(b) The vertical axis on all of the charts runs from 0 to 7 weeks

Charts 6(a)-(h) show the median waiting times for specified diagnostic services across the year by month. The data summarised here is available on [StatsWales](#). The charts show that in 2016-17:

- The 2016-17 peak shown in [Chart 4](#) is reflected in all of the services, as is the subsequent decline.
- As with the number waiting over 8 weeks for each diagnostic service (see [Table 2](#)), the median waiting time for all services (Chart 6(h)) closely resembles the median wait for radiology

Table 3: Number of patients waiting over 8 weeks for specified diagnostic services by area of provider, 2016-17

	LHB provider							Wales
	Betsi Cadwaladr University	Powys Teaching	Hywel Dda University	ABMU (a)	Cwm Taf University	Aneurin Bevan University	Cardiff and Vale University	
Monthly charts (b)								
Apr-16	135	0	5	56	2,843	3,654	3,448	10,141
May-16	127	0	1	80	2,112	3,464	3,350	9,134
Jun-16	190	0	1	52	2,115	2,814	3,173	8,345
Jul-16	236	0	0	166	2,025	3,247	3,152	8,826
Aug-16	141	0	12	293	2,334	4,102	2,924	9,806
Sep-16	85	0	10	272	2,314	5,438	2,702	10,821
Oct-16	50	3	0	232	1,732	5,452	2,707	10,176
Nov-16	84	2	0	280	1,549	5,749	2,652	10,316
Dec-16	42	2	0	483	1,782	6,075	2,444	10,828
Jan-17	76	13	0	491	1,347	5,203	2,284	9,414
Feb-17	1	2	0	369	716	3,557	1,980	6,625
Mar-17	1	0	0	320	92	2,491	1,837	4,741

Source: Diagnostic and therapy services waiting times, NHS Wales Informatics Service (NWIS)

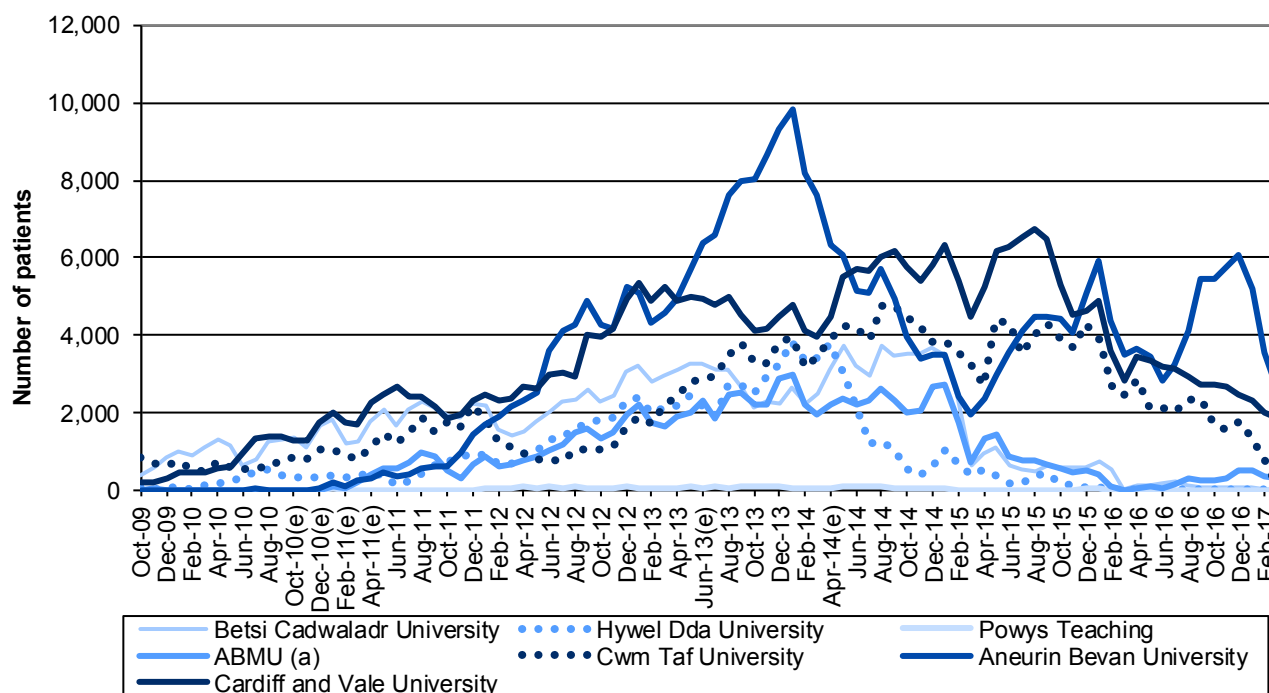
(a) Abertawe Bro Morgannwg University

(b) The vertical axis for the charts is the same for each health board, but the Wales chart uses a different scale.

Table 3 shows the number of patients waiting over 8 weeks for specified diagnostic services by LHB provider. The table shows that in 2016-17:

- Although the numbers overall have decreased in the last few months of 2016-17, Abertawe Bro Morgannwg was the only health board who saw an increase in the number waiting over 8 weeks when compared to the start of the year.
- At the start of the year, Cwm Taf accounted for 28.0 per cent of waits over 8 weeks, the third highest behind Aneurin Bevan and Cardiff and Vale. By March 2017, Cwm Taf accounted for just 1.9 per cent of these waits due to drops for all services, leaving Aneurin Bevan and Cardiff and Vale as the main source of waits over 8 weeks.

Chart 7: Number of patients waiting over 8 weeks for diagnostic services by area of provider, October 2009 onwards



Source: Diagnostic and therapy services waiting times, NHS Wales Informatics Service (NWIS)

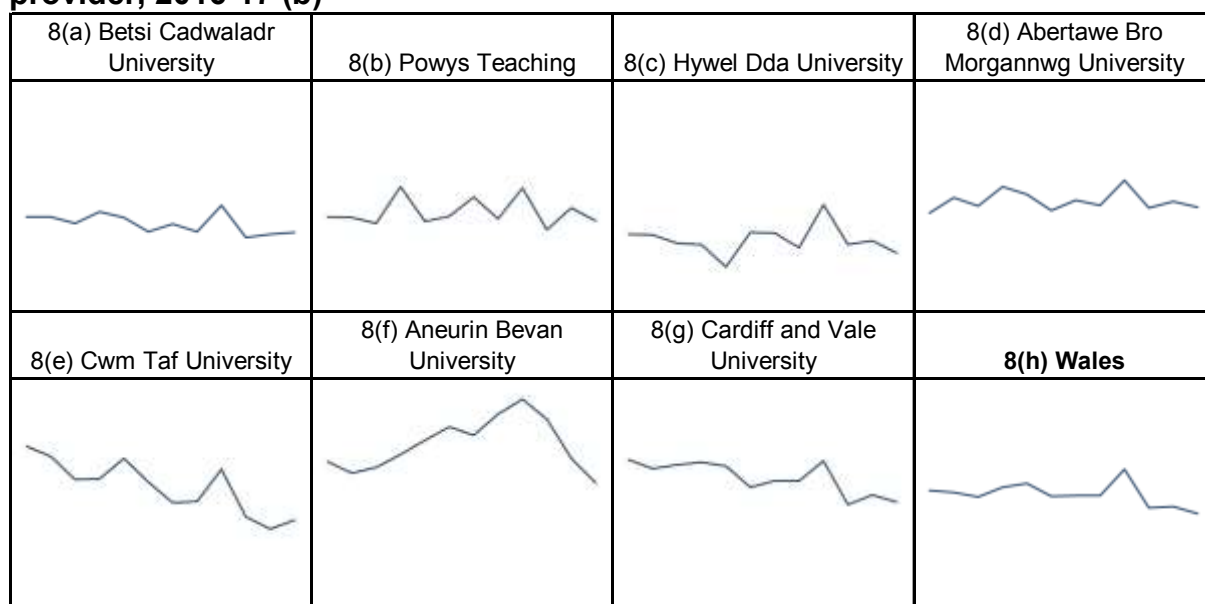
(a) Abertawe Bro Morgannwg University.

(e) Figures include a known estimate. See [Key Quality Information](#) for further details

Chart 7 shows the trend of patients waiting over 8 weeks by local health board.

- Except for Powys Teaching Health Board, all LHBs had overall increases in the number of patients waiting over 8 weeks from October 2009 to January 2014 (Aneurin Bevan University LHB had almost 10,000 waiting longer than the target time in January 2014, mostly for radiology). Since January 2014, all of the LHBs have had an overall decrease in number of patients waiting over 8 weeks, although Aneurin Bevan has twice risen to around 6,000 before coming down again.
- The drops at both Cwm Taf and Cardiff and Vale health boards over 2016-17 shown in [Table 3](#) was a continuation of an overall decline which began in 2015.

Charts 8(a)-(h): Median waiting times by month for diagnostic services by LHB provider, 2016-17 (b)



Source: Diagnostic and therapy services waiting times, NHS Wales Informatics Service (NWIS)

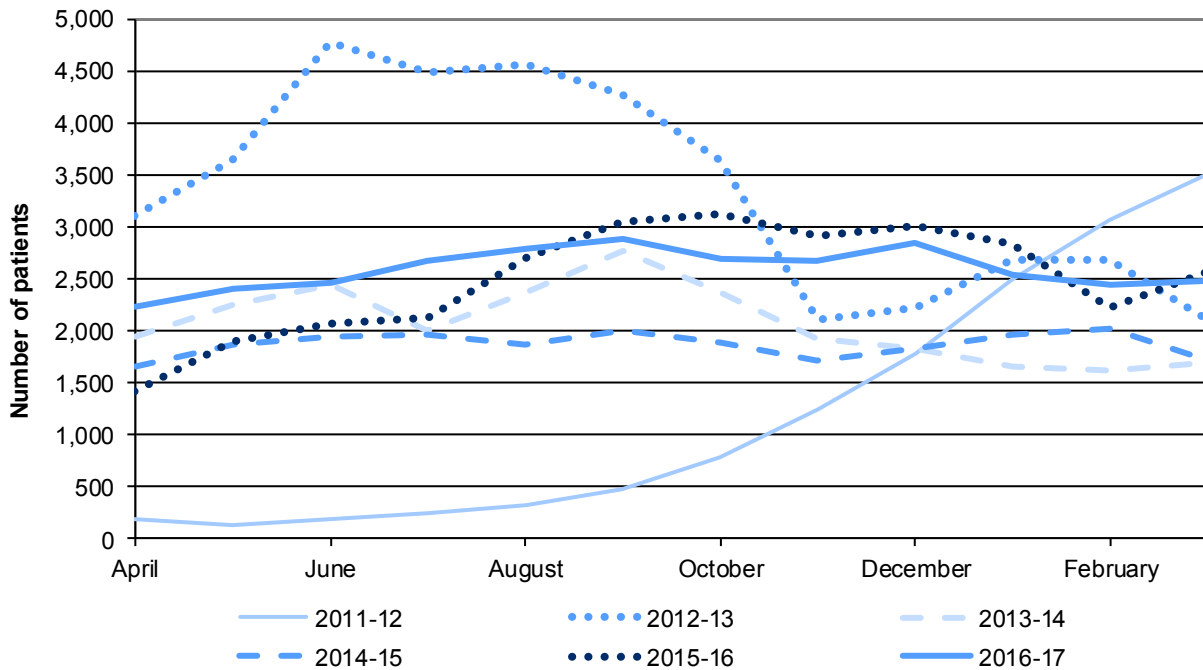
(b) The vertical axis on all of the charts runs from 0 to 6 weeks

Charts 8(a)-(h) show the median waiting times for specified diagnostic services by LHB provider across the year by month. The data summarised here is available on [StatsWales](#). The median for Powys Teaching may be more volatile than other health boards as number waiting at this health board is quite low every month. The charts show that in 2016-17:

- Most health boards saw an overall decrease in the median waiting times over the course of the year, although all saw a spike in December.
- Cwm Taf had the longest median wait in April 2016, but this had dropped to the 5th highest by March 2017, corresponding to the large fall in the number waiting over 8 weeks shown in [Table 3](#).
- The median for Aneurin Bevan increased overall until December 2016, before decreasing in 2017.

Therapy services

Chart 9: Number of patients waiting over 14 weeks for therapy services by financial year, 2011-12 onwards



Source: Diagnostic and therapy services waiting times, NHS Wales Informatics Service (NWIS)

Chart 9 shows the number of patients waiting over 14 weeks for therapy services by financial year, from 2011-12 to 2016-17. The chart shows that, for therapy services:

- The number of patients waiting over 14 weeks in 2016-17 was one of the most stable years on record, with numbers remaining between 2,200 and 2,900.
- There is more variability in the earlier years shown in the chart, numbers increasing considerably through 2011-12 before declining in 2012-13. The following years do not show such a high level of variation.
- There is even less seasonality than with diagnostics patients waiting over 8 weeks (see [Chart 1](#)), with no discernable pattern between the years.

Table 4: Patients waiting and median waiting times for therapy services, 2016-17

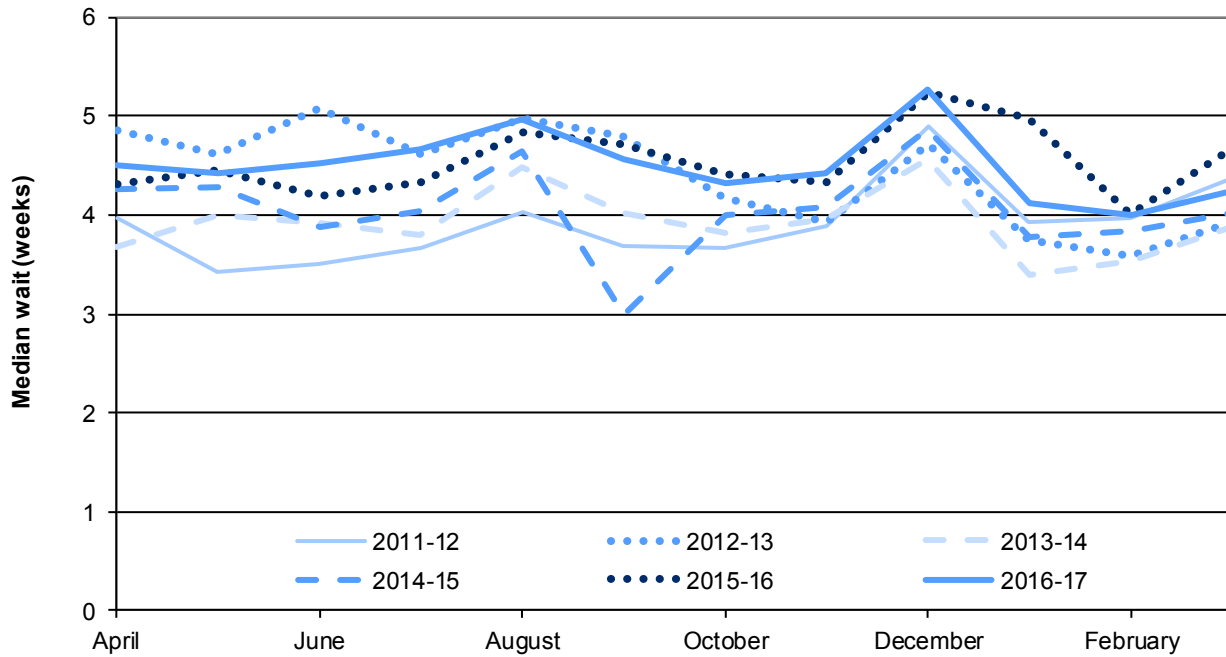
Month	Patients waiting				Median waiting time
	Total	Less than 14 weeks	14 weeks and over	Percentage over 14 weeks	
Apr-16	53,246	51,015	2,231	4.2	4.5
May-16	52,661	50,244	2,417	4.6	4.4
Jun-16	52,794	50,335	2,459	4.7	4.5
Jul-16	52,531	49,853	2,678	5.1	4.7
Aug-16	50,312	47,522	2,790	5.5	5.0
Sep-16	51,611	48,717	2,894	5.6	4.6
Oct-16	51,869	49,172	2,697	5.2	4.3
Nov-16	51,636	48,955	2,681	5.2	4.4
Dec-16	51,301	48,445	2,856	5.6	5.3
Jan-17	48,888	46,351	2,537	5.2	4.1
Feb-17	50,620	48,175	2,445	4.8	4.0
Mar-17	54,454	51,977	2,477	4.5	4.2

Source: Diagnostic and therapy services waiting times, NHS Wales Informatics Service (NWIS)

Table 4 shows the numbers and percentages of patients waiting in relation to the standard time (14 weeks) and the median waits for therapy services. The table shows that in 2016-17:

- As with the number waiting over 8 weeks for diagnostic services (see [Table 1](#)), the highest number of patients waiting longer than the standard time occurred in December 2016, as did the longest median.
- The best performance against the standard over the year was in April 2016, although the shortest median was in February 2017.

Chart 10: Median waiting times for therapy services by financial year, 2011-12 onwards



Source: Diagnostic and therapy services waiting times, NHS Wales Informatics Service (NWIS)

Chart 10 shows the median waiting time for the services by financial year, 2011-12 onwards. The chart shows that:

- As with the median waits for diagnostic services (see [Chart 4](#)), the peak month for median waits tends to be December, with smaller peaks also visible in August.
- Although there is very little year on year variation, 2016-17 has generally shown some of the highest median waits shown in the chart. In fact, 2016-17 had a longer median wait than 2013-14 and 2014-15 for every month of the year.

Table 5: Number of patients waiting over 14 weeks by specified therapy service, 2016-17 (b)

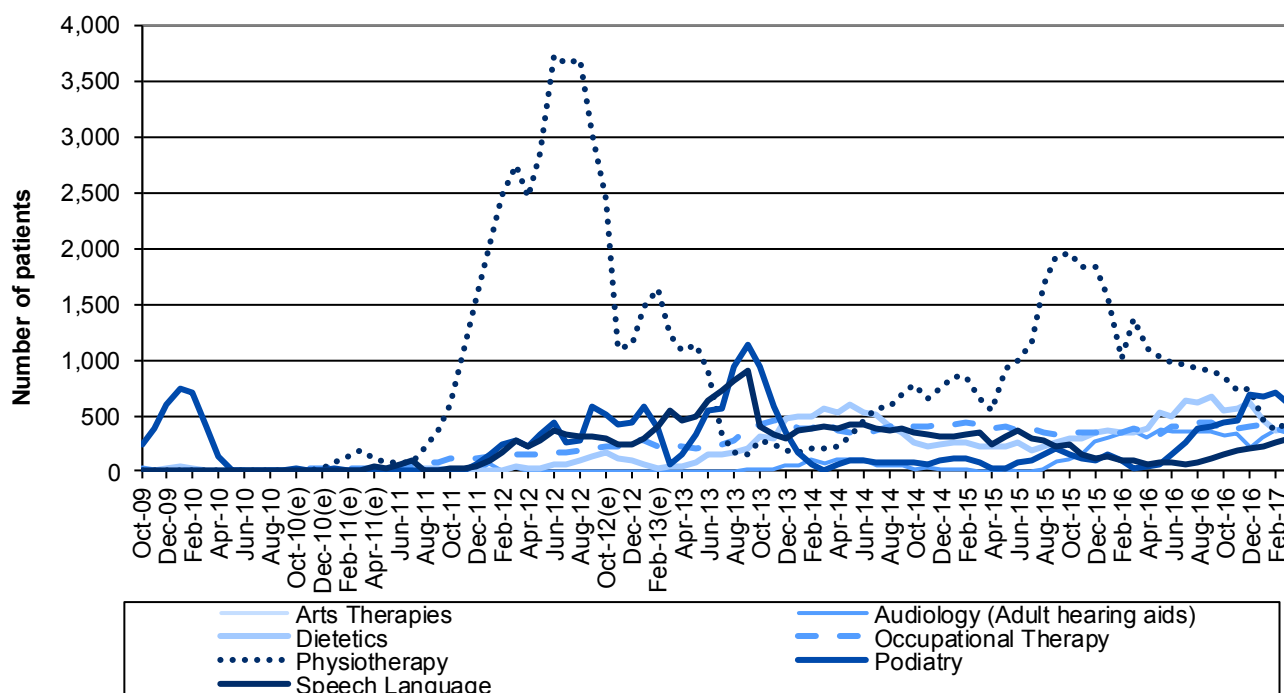
	Service							
	Arts Therapies	Audiology (Adult hearing aids)	Dietetics	Occupational Therapy	Physiotherapy	Podiatry	Speech Language	All services
Monthly charts (b)								
Apr-16	0	309	376	343	1,098	36	69	2,231
May-16	0	370	535	334	1,036	69	73	2,417
Jun-16	3	366	492	399	966	150	83	2,459
Jul-16	0	354	635	403	958	259	69	2,678
Aug-16	0	361	611	434	927	377	80	2,790
Sep-16	0	363	673	436	906	407	109	2,894
Oct-16	0	327	550	373	849	438	160	2,697
Nov-16	0	338	569	392	727	460	195	2,681
Dec-16	0	217	622	399	734	684	200	2,856
Jan-17	0	305	462	416	457	676	221	2,537
Feb-17	0	367	361	382	370	699	266	2,445
Mar-17	0	390	380	340	461	603	303	2,477

Source: Diagnostic and therapy services waiting times, NHS Wales Informatics Service (NWIS)

(b) The vertical axis for the charts is the same for each individual service, but the all services chart uses a different scale. Table 5 shows the number of patients waiting over 14 weeks by specified therapy service. The table shows that in 2016-17:

- Unlike diagnostic services (see [Table 2](#)), the trend over the year for the number waiting over the standard time for therapy services varies from service to service. Although the overall number has remained fairly stable, both podiatry and speech language have seen considerable increases, but this has mostly been cancelled out by the decrease in physiotherapy over the same period. Physiotherapy accounted for around a half of all waits over 14 weeks in April 2016, but this had dropped to under a fifth by March 2017.

Chart 11: Number of patients waiting over 14 weeks by specified therapy service, October 2009 onwards



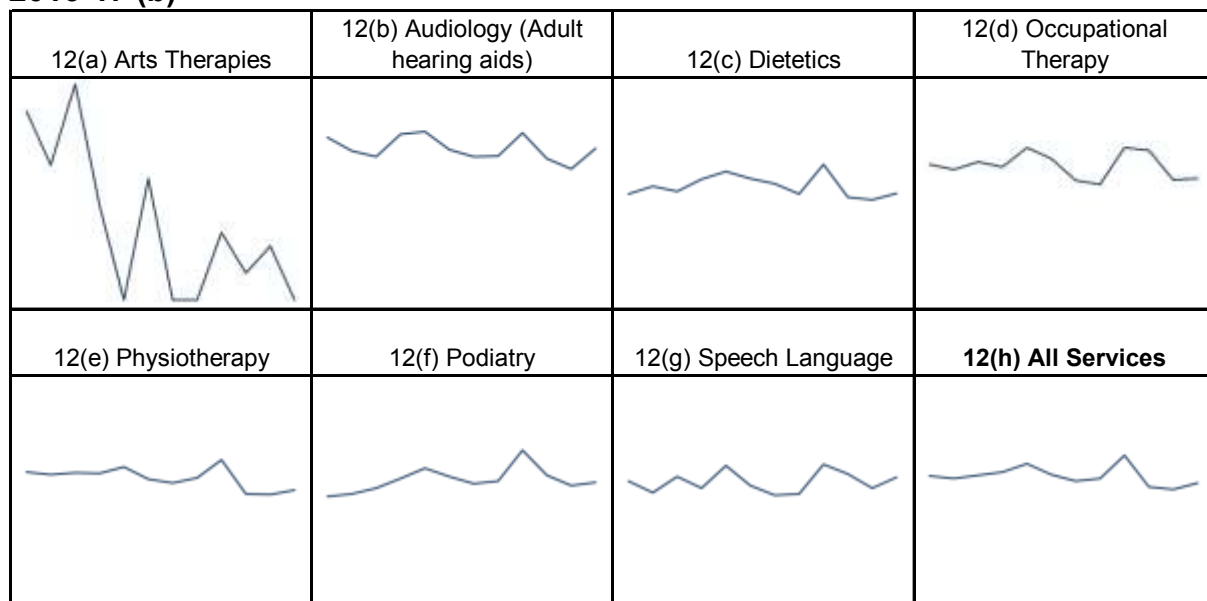
Source: Diagnostic and therapy services waiting times, NHS Wales Informatics Service (NWIS)

(e) Figures include a known estimate. See [Key Quality Information](#) for further details

Chart 11 shows the trend of patients waiting over 14 weeks by therapy service.

- The chart shows that any increase in the number waiting over 14 weeks since early 2015 is driven largely by the increases for those receiving physiotherapy services.
- Apart from a small peak in podiatry figures in January 2010, all therapy services had low numbers until August 2011. There were then increases in numbers for most services to different extents (physiotherapy seeing the biggest increase, from 77 in July 2011 to 3,735 in June 2012).
- Podiatry and speech language both saw peaks in September 2013, before decreasing and stabilizing. However both services have been increasing since the start of 2016-17, with podiatry overtaking physiotherapy as the therapy service with the highest number of patients waiting over 14 weeks in January. This was the first time physiotherapy didn't have the highest number since June 2014.
- It can be seen that, after declining to 144 in September 2013, the number of physiotherapy waits then started to increase again, reaching 1,965 in October 2015. Since then, this figure has declined overall, hence the decline in 2016-17 shown in [Table 5](#).

Charts 12(a)-(h): Median waiting times by month for specified therapy services, 2016-17 (b)



Source: Diagnostic and therapy services waiting times, NHS Wales Informatics Service (NWIS)

(b) The vertical axis on all of the charts runs from 0 to 8 weeks

Charts 12(a)-(h) show the median waiting times for specified diagnostic services by LHB provider by month across the year. The data summarised here is available on [StatsWales](https://stats.wales.nhs.uk/). The median for arts therapies may be more volatile than other therapy services as the number waiting for this service is very low every month, and so the medians are difficult to interpret. The charts show that in 2016-17:

- The longest median occurred in December for 4 of the services, while the shortest median occurred in February for 3 of the services.
- The pattern across the year for physiotherapy and podiatry closely resembles the trend for all services (Chart 12(h)), as these services had the most patients waiting.

Table 6: Number of patients waiting over 14 weeks for therapy services by area of provider, 2016-17 (b)

	LHB provider							Wales
	Betsi Cadwaladr University	Powys Teaching	Hywel Dda University	ABMU (a)	Cwm Taf University	Aneurin Bevan University	Cardiff and Vale University	
Monthly charts								
Apr-16	0	9	1,321	149	6	508	238	2,231
May-16	0	14	1,386	176	6	571	264	2,417
Jun-16	1	23	1,312	220	24	611	268	2,459
Jul-16	0	32	1,453	210	7	694	282	2,678
Aug-16	1	21	1,436	256	12	749	315	2,790
Sep-16	0	24	1,452	283	96	696	343	2,894
Oct-16	0	19	1,326	305	85	697	265	2,697
Nov-16	2	33	1,367	415	5	597	262	2,681
Dec-16	0	47	1,491	562	1	499	256	2,856
Jan-17	0	27	1,514	396	1	354	245	2,537
Feb-17	4	34	1,523	324	0	310	250	2,445
Mar-17	0	25	1,643	254	0	385	170	2,477

Source: Diagnostic and therapy services waiting times, NHS Wales Informatics Service (NWIS)

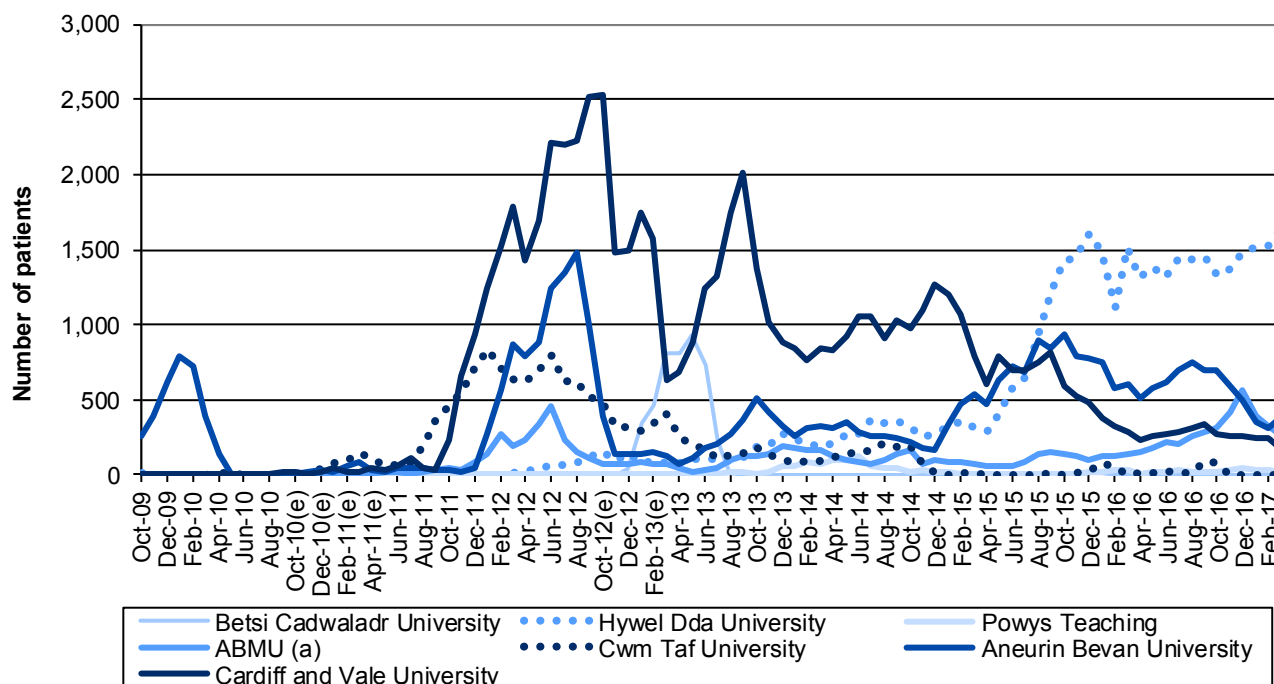
(a) Abertawe Bro Morgannwg University

(b) The vertical axis for the charts is the same for each health board, but the Wales chart uses a different scale.

Table 6 shows the number of patients waiting over 14 weeks for specified therapy services by LHB provider. The table shows that in 2016-17:

- The majority of patients waiting over 14 weeks were at Hywel Dda, who accounted for 66.3 per cent of those waiting over 14 weeks in Wales in March 2017.
- Betsi Cadwaladr had fewer than 5 patients waiting for every month of the year, while both Cwm Taf and Powys were below 100.
- The number waiting over 14 weeks at Hywel Dda and ABMU increased overall throughout the year, while the numbers at Aneurin Bevan and Cardiff and Vale declined.

Chart 13: Number of patients waiting over 14 weeks for therapy services by area of provider, October 2009 onwards



Source: Diagnostic and therapy services waiting times, NHS Wales Informatics Service (NWIS)

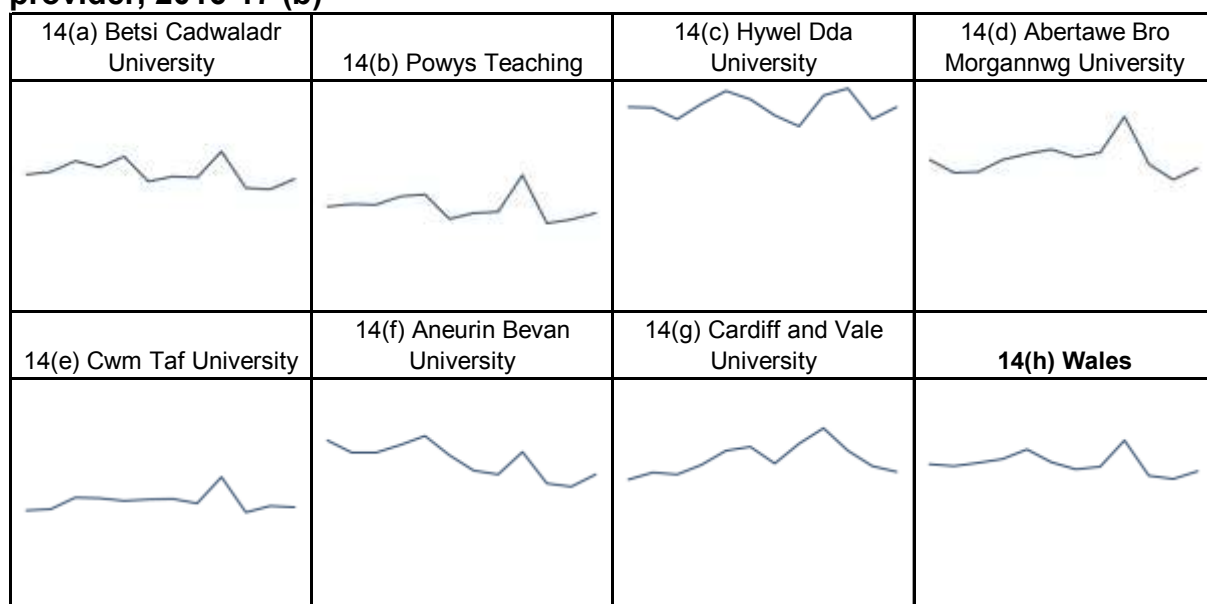
(a) Abertawe Bro Morgannwg University.

(e) Figures include a known estimate. See [Key Quality Information](#) for further details

Chart 6 shows the trend of patients waiting longer than the standard time for therapy services since October 2009 by health board.

- Apart from a peak in Aneurin Bevan University Health Board figures (driven by waits for podiatry services highlighted in [Chart 11](#)) in January 2010, the health boards were broadly stable until the latter half of 2011, during which time four LHBS began to increase to varying extents, with three of these reaching peaks between June 2012 and October 2012 due to the high number of physiotherapy patients waiting over 14 weeks.
- From November 2011 until June 2015 Cardiff and Vale University Health Board had the most patients waiting longer than the target time in most months.
- Having been on an upward trend since 2012, Hywel Dda University Health Board has had the highest number since August 2015 (driven by waits for physiotherapy services highlighted in [Chart 11](#)). The number of patients waiting over 14 weeks for therapy services has increased from 2 in March 2013 to 1,643 in March 2017 at this health board.

Charts 14(a)-(h): Median waiting times by month for therapy services by area of provider, 2016-17 (b)



Source: Diagnostic and therapy services waiting times, NHS Wales Informatics Service (NWIS)

(b) The vertical axis on all of the charts runs from 0 to 7 weeks

Charts 14(a)-(h) show the median waiting times for specified therapy services by LHB provider by month across the year. The data summarised here is available on [StatsWales](https://stats.wales.nhs.uk/). The charts show that in 2016-17:

- With the exception of Aneurin Bevan and Hywel Dda, the peak month for all health boards was December. Most of the LHB's followed a similar pattern to Wales as a whole (chart 14(h)), with a spikes in August and December followed by a sharp decline.

Key quality information

We publish a detailed [quality report](#) on NHS Wales Diagnostic and Therapy waiting times statistics. This includes information on definitions and coverage, as well as other aspects of quality such as timeliness, relevance and comparability and also details of users and uses of our statistics.

Relevance

Definitions

Definitions of terms used are in the [NHS Wales Data Dictionary](#).

Although this release refers to patients, it is possible that a person could be on a number of different lists waiting for different conditions – i.e. there would be one patient but more than one pathway. Due to it being an aggregate data collection we're not able to measure the number of unique patients.

Changes to the statistical release

From April 2017 we have been publishing our monthly NHS activity and performance statistics on one day, with annual rather than quarterly analytical releases. This is the first in the new series of annual releases relating to diagnostic and therapy services waiting times. Please see the [Chief Statistician's update](#) for more information. We welcome feedback on the new look release as well as any further analysis that would be of interest.

Median

The median time is the middle time when all waiting times are ordered from shortest wait to longest, so a half of all patient pathways wait this time or less. It is commonly used in preference to the mean as it is less susceptible to extreme values than the mean.

It should be noted that median times are calculated from aggregate data, rather than patient level data, and therefore are only estimates. Also because we do not have patient level data we have not presented the mean in these statistics.

Accuracy

Percentage point changes are calculated using unrounded figures.

Revisions

Any revisions to the data will be noted in the information accompanying the [StatsWales](#) cubes each month, and any large revisions will be noted on the summary headline page.

Estimates

Occasionally local health boards do not submit complete information in time for the release. When this occurs an estimate is included within the data presented. Figures which include a known estimate are marked with an “(e)”.

Diagnostic Endoscopy, Dietetics, Occupational Therapy, Physiological Measurement, Physiotherapy and Speech Language data for Wwithybush General Hospital (Hywel Dda Health Board) have been estimated for September 2010 – May 2011 using data from August 2010 as they were unable to submit data due to migration from PAS to Myrddin

Physiotherapy data for October 2012 for Cardiff and Vale University Health Board are estimated using their data for September 2012, as they were unable to provide full data on physiotherapy for October 2012.

Physiotherapy data for February 2013 for Cardiff and Vale University LHB are estimated using their data for January 2013. This is due to Cardiff and Vale University being unable to provide full data on physiotherapy for February 2013, because staff sickness resulted in patients not being entered into the system in time for the submission.

Radiology & imaging data for June 2013 for Cardiff and Vale University LHB are estimated using their data for May 2013. This is due to Cardiff and Vale University experiencing technical difficulties with the base data.

Neurophysiology data for April 2014 for Betsi Cadwaladr University LHB are estimated using their data for March 2014, this is due to the implementation of the service to a new hospital site which resulted in the April 2014 data being unreliable and hence not submitted by the LHB.

Public sector strike

The public sector strike on 30 November 2011 and 10 May 2012 will have had an effect on performance in the November and May figures, respectively, as many diagnostic and therapy tests were cancelled for that date.

Doctors' strikes – 21 June 2012

Diagnostic and Therapy service waiting times may have been affected by the doctors' strikes on 21 June 2012 and this might have had a slight impact on performance.

Timeliness and punctuality

All outputs adhere to the Code of Practice by pre-announcing the date of publication through the [Upcoming calendar](#) web pages. Furthermore, should the need arise to postpone an output this would follow the Welsh Government's [Revisions, errors and postponements](#) arrangements.

We publish releases as soon as practicable after the relevant time period. Data for the end of month position is published within six weeks of the reference date. This allows for the significant validation by LHBs, NWIS and the Health Statistics and Analysis Unit.

Accessibility and clarity

The statistics are published in an accessible, orderly, pre-announced manner on the Welsh Government website at 9:30am on the day of publication. An RSS feed alerts registered users to this publication. Simultaneously the quarterly releases are also published on the National Statistics Publication Hub. All releases are available to download for free.

More detailed data is available at the same time on the [StatsWales](#) website and this can be manipulated online or downloaded into spreadsheets for use offline.

Comparability and coherence

Every month the data are all collected from the same sources and adhere to the national standard - they will also be coherent within and across organisations. Where there are changes in definitions or scope we clearly note this in the release and add appropriate caveats to the data.

Where there are changes to the data provided, this is shown clearly in the outputs. Where advance warning is known of future changes, these will be pre-announced in accordance with Welsh Government arrangements.

There is similar information available from other parts of the UK for diagnostic services but the data is not comparable due to local definitions and standards in each area – see Coherence below.

There are no therapy waits reported in other UK countries.

Agreed standards and definitions within Wales provide assurance that the data is consistent across local health boards.

Statisticians in all four home nations have collaborated as part of the 'UK Comparative Waiting Times Group'. The aim of the group was to look across published health statistics, in particular waiting times, and compile a comparison of (i) what is measured in each country, (ii) how the statistics are similar and (iii) where they have key differences. That information is available on the [Government Statistical Service](#) website.

Data on NHS Wales diagnostic and therapy waiting times is available on [StatsWales](#).

Data on NHS England diagnostic waiting times is available on the [NHS England website](#).

Data on NHS Scotland diagnostic waiting times is available on the [Information Services Division Scotland website](#).

NHS Northern Ireland hospital waiting times statistics can be found on the [Department of Health website](#).

National Statistics status

The [United Kingdom Statistics Authority](#) has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the [Code of Practice for Official Statistics](#).

National Statistics status means that official statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and public value.

All official statistics should comply with all aspects of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. They are awarded National Statistics status following an assessment by the UK Statistics Authority's regulatory arm. The Authority considers whether the statistics meet the highest standards of Code compliance, including the value they add to public decisions and debate.

It is Welsh Government's responsibility to maintain compliance with the standards expected of National Statistics. If we become concerned about whether these statistics are still meeting the appropriate standards, we will discuss any concerns with the Authority promptly. National Statistics status can be removed at any point when the highest standards are not maintained, and reinstated when standards are restored.

Well-being of Future Generations Act (WFG)

The Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. The Act puts in place seven well-being goals for Wales. These are for a more equal, prosperous, resilient, healthier and globally responsible Wales, with cohesive communities and a vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language. Under section (10)(1) of the Act, the Welsh Ministers must (a) publish indicators ("national indicators") that must be applied for the purpose of measuring progress towards the achievement of the Well-being goals, and (b) lay a copy of the national indicators before the National Assembly. The 46 national indicators were laid in March 2016.

Information on indicators and associated technical information - [How do you measure a nation's progress? - National Indicators](#)

Further information on the [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#).

The statistics included in this release could also provide supporting narrative to the national indicators and be used by public services boards in relation to their local well-being assessments and local well-being plans.

Further details

The document is available at:

<http://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/nhs-diagnostic-therapy-service-waiting-times/?lang=en>

Next update

June 2018

We want your feedback

We welcome any feedback on any aspect of these statistics which can be provided by email to stats.healthinfo@wales.gsi.gov.uk.

Open Government Licence

All content is available under the [Open Government Licence v3.0](#), except where otherwise stated.

