



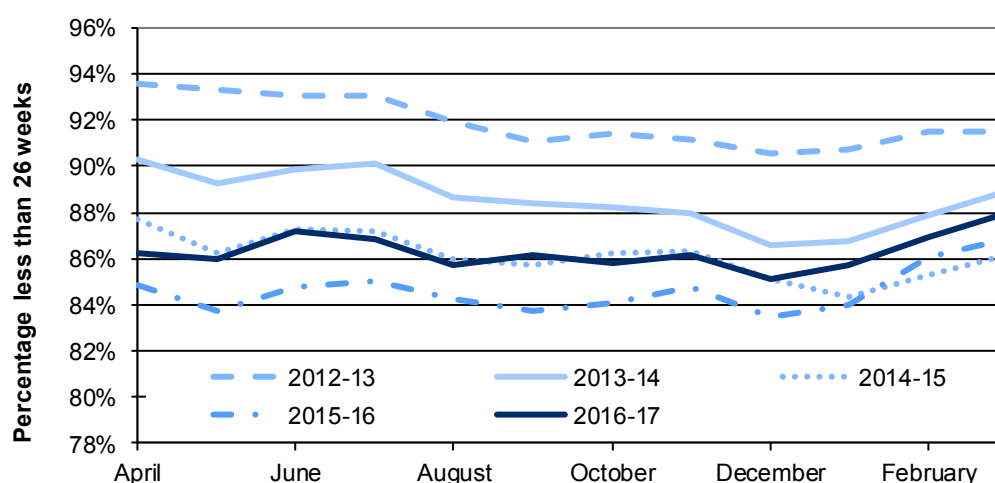
NHS Wales Referral to Treatment Times: 2016–17

13 July 2017
SFR 76/2017

The targets relating to referral to treatment times in Wales are:

- 95 per cent of patients waiting less than 26 weeks from referral to treatment
- No patients waiting more than 36 weeks for treatment

Chart 1: Performance against the 26 week target by financial year 2012-13 onwards



***Please note this chart does not start at zero**

Source: Referral to treatment times (RTT), NHS Wales Informatics Services (NWIS)

Summary

- Over the year performance has improved against the 26 week target of 95% compared to the previous year, but was still below the target.
- There has been an overall improvement since the start of 2016 following an overall decline since March 2012. The March 2017 figures were the best since March 2014.
- The median wait for those waiting to start treatment varied throughout the year from a high of 10.3 weeks in December 2016 to low of 8.8 weeks in March 2017.
- Each year over 1,000,000 pathways are closed in Wales.

About this release

Referral to Treatment Time (RTT) is the period of time from referral by a general practitioner (GP) or other medical practitioner to hospital for treatment in the NHS in Wales.

The NHS Outcomes Framework 2016-17 (released in [WHC \(2016\) 23](#)) is used to measure delivery throughout 2016-17.

Definitions of terms used and quality information can be found in the [Quality report](#).

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Table 1: Patient pathways waiting and median waiting times by month, 2016-17

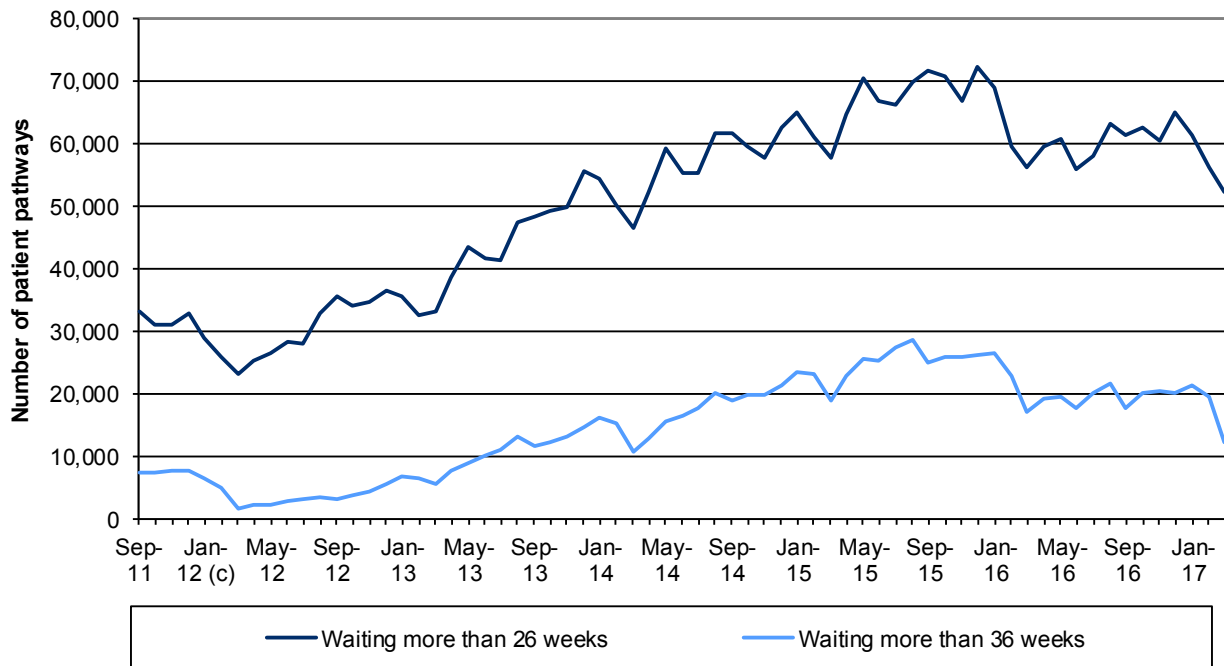
Month	Patients waiting					Median waiting time
	Total	Less than 26 weeks	Between 26 and 36 weeks	Over 36 weeks	Percentage less than 26 weeks	
Apr-16	434,036	374,371	40,307	19,358	86.3	9.4
May-16	434,166	373,447	41,273	19,446	86.0	9.4
Jun-16	434,928	379,027	38,290	17,611	87.1	9.3
Jul-16	441,541	383,494	37,972	20,075	86.9	9.8
Aug-16	442,535	379,401	41,471	21,663	85.7	10.2
Sep-16	443,820	382,311	43,668	17,841	86.1	10.1
Oct-16	441,385	378,595	42,648	20,142	85.8	9.8
Nov-16	438,708	378,065	40,258	20,385	86.2	9.4
Dec-16	436,087	371,131	44,805	20,151	85.1	10.3
Jan-17	429,487	368,087	40,014	21,386	85.7	10.2
Feb-17	430,641	374,466	36,780	19,395	87.0	9.8
Mar-17	434,536	382,222	39,960	12,354	88.0	8.8

Source: Referral to treatment times (RTT), NHS Wales Informatics Services (NWIS)

Table 1 shows a detailed summary of patients waiting in relation to the targets and median waiting times across 2016-17.

- The number of pathways waiting to begin treatment increased throughout 2016-17 until a peak in September 2016 of 443,820, it then began to decline until January 2017 before increasing further until March 2017.
- Performance against the 26 week target generally declined through the course of the year until December 2016 with 85.1 per cent patient pathways waiting less than 26 weeks. Month on month improvements were then seen until March 2017, which held the best performance in the year against the 26 week target of 88.0 per cent. All months of 2016-17 missed the 26 week and 36 week targets.
- Patient pathways waiting for longer than 36 weeks fluctuated throughout the year between 17,000 and 22,000 before the low of 12,354 in March 2017.

Chart 2: Number of patient pathways waiting over 26 and 36 weeks to start treatment, September 2011 onwards



Source: Referral to treatment times (RTT), NHS Wales Informatics Services (NWIS)

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

Chart 2 shows the number of patient pathways waiting to start treatment at the end of each month, who have been waiting over 26 and 36 weeks. Since September 2011:

- The number of patient pathways waiting over 26 weeks to start treatment has increased, although this has declined overall since the start of 2016. December 2015 had the most patient pathways waiting over 26 weeks over the period covered by the chart.
- Overall between March 2012 and August 2015 the number of patient pathways waiting over 36 weeks increased, although there has been an overall decline since then.

Chart 3: Average number of patient pathways waiting to start treatment by weeks waiting, 2012-13 onwards

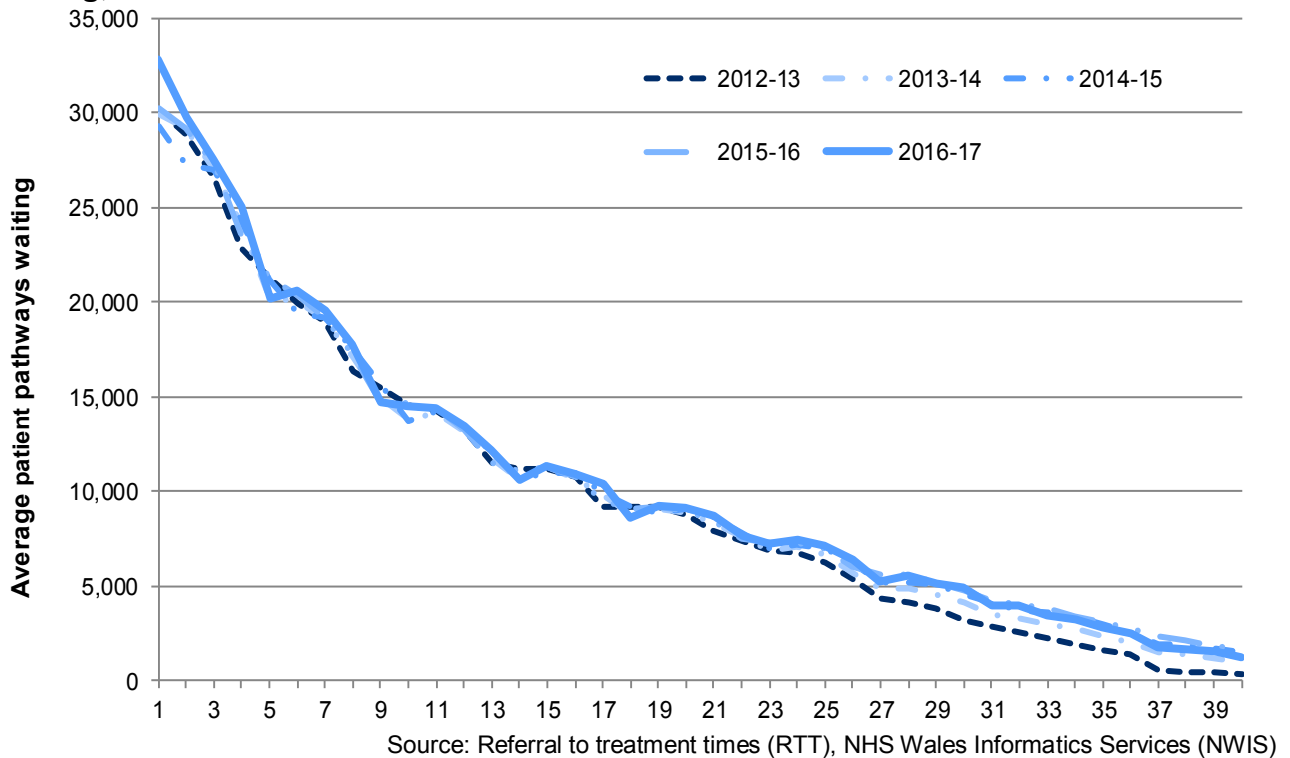


Chart 3 shows the average year on year variation in the distribution of patient pathways across weeks waiting to start treatment. Patient pathways waiting over 40 weeks to start treatment have been excluded from this analysis.

- The chart shows that most patient pathways are waiting less than 11 weeks, and that as the weeks waiting to start treatment increases, the numbers waiting decreases.
- As the graph shows, the average distribution of pathways waiting is consistent year on year.

Section 1: Performance against the 26 week target

Table 2: Performance of patient pathways waiting less than 26 weeks to start treatment by LHB of provider, 2016-17

	LHB Provider							Wales
	Betsi		Hywel Dda University	ABMU (a)	Cwm Taf University	Aneurin		
	Cadwaladr University	Powys Teaching				Bevan University	Cardiff and Vale University	
Monthly charts (b)								
Apr-16	86.8	99.8	81.4	87.1	86.6	87.8	85.5	86.3
May-16	86.8	99.3	80.2	87.6	86.2	87.8	84.6	86.0
Jun-16	87.6	99.3	81.5	88.4	88.0	89.2	86.0	87.1
Jul-16	87.2	99.3	81.8	88.2	87.6	88.8	85.5	86.9
Aug-16	86.2	99.2	80.7	87.2	86.7	87.8	83.8	85.7
Sep-16	86.1	99.4	80.6	87.6	87.4	88.1	85.1	86.1
Oct-16	85.5	98.9	80.0	88.0	86.7	87.3	85.1	85.8
Nov-16	85.5	98.8	80.5	88.2	88.0	87.4	86.0	86.2
Dec-16	84.0	98.7	79.9	86.8	87.3	86.7	85.0	85.1
Jan-17	84.3	99.0	81.4	86.9	88.9	87.8	84.9	85.7
Feb-17	85.5	99.6	83.8	87.6	90.8	89.4	85.4	87.0
Mar-17	87.1	100.0	85.6	88.2	91.9	90.5	85.5	88.0

Source: Referral to treatment times (RTT), NHS Wales Informatics Services (NWIS)

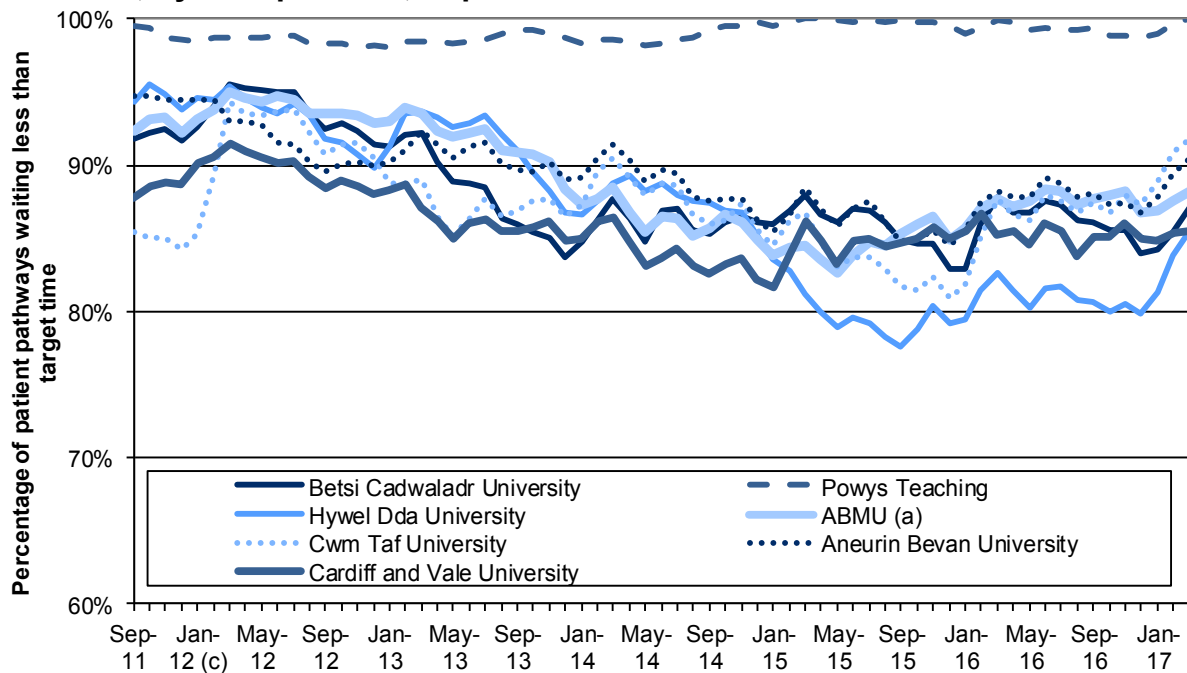
(a) Abertawe Bro Morgannwg University.

(b) The vertical axis is the same for all the charts.

Table 2 shows the percentage of patient pathways waiting less than 26 weeks to start treatment for 2016-17, by LHB provider. [Chart 4](#) provides additional information on the trends over time by health board.

- Performance against the 26 week target remained fairly stable until December 2016, with some health boards seeing a slight decrease before an increase in the months leading to March 2017.

Chart 4: Percentage of patient pathways waiting less than 26 weeks to start treatment, by LHB provider, September 2011 onwards



*Please note this chart does not start at zero

Source: Referral to treatment times (RTT), NHS Wales Informatics Services (NWIS)

(a) Abertawe Bro Morgannwg University

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

- Between March 2012 and September 2015, there was a gradual decline for all health boards except Powys Teaching Health Board, although all health boards have seen improvement since then.
- Hywel Dda University Health Board has had the lowest percentage against the 26 week target of all the health boards between February 2015 and February 2017. In March 2017 Cardiff and Vale had the lowest percentage against the 26 week target of 84.3 per cent.

The table below looks at the five treatment functions with the most patient pathways waiting to start treatment in March 2017. Allied health professional services and diagnostic services are pseudo-treatment functions and are subject to the diagnostic and therapy services (DATS) standard. These have been excluded from all treatment function analysis within this release.

Table 3: Percentage of patient pathways waiting less than 26 weeks to start treatment by selected treatment functions, 2016-17 (a)

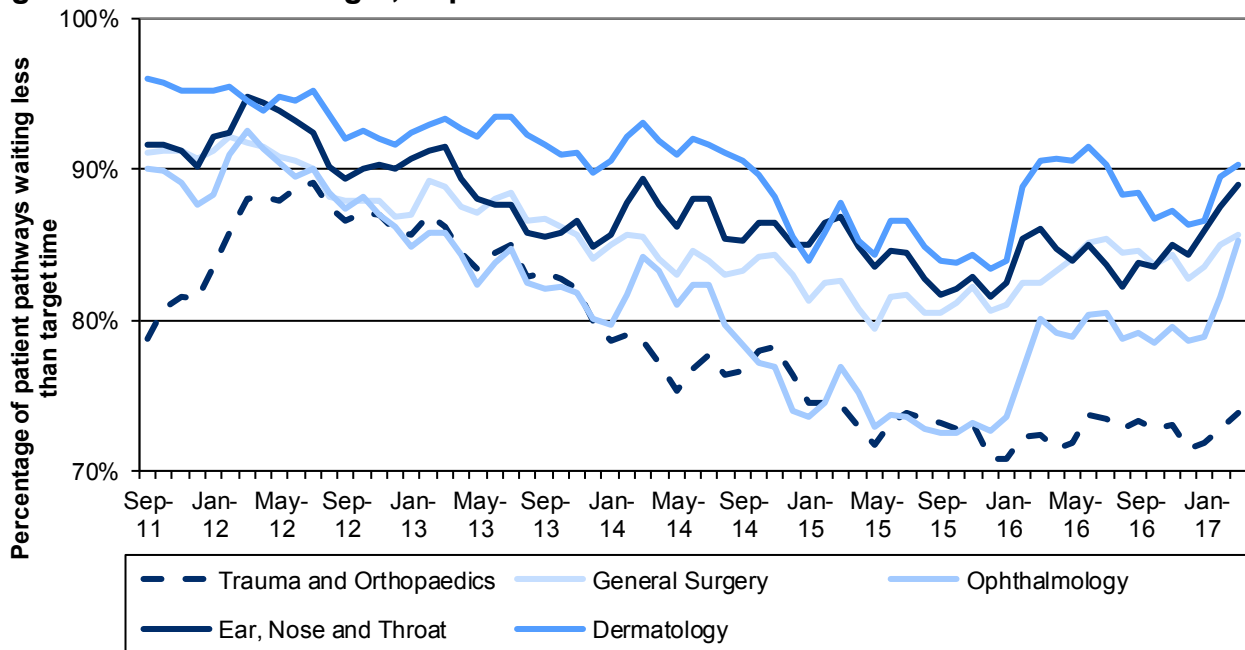
	Treatment Functions					All Treatment Functions
	Trauma and Orthopaedics	General Surgery	Ophthalmology	Ear, Nose and Throat	Dermatology	
Monthly charts (b)						
Apr-16	71.5	83.3	79.2	84.8	90.7	86.3
May-16	71.8	84.1	78.9	83.9	90.6	86.0
Jun-16	73.7	85.2	80.4	85.0	91.6	87.1
Jul-16	73.5	85.4	80.6	83.7	90.3	86.9
Aug-16	72.8	84.5	78.7	82.3	88.4	85.7
Sep-16	73.4	84.7	79.2	83.9	88.4	86.1
Oct-16	72.8	83.6	78.5	83.6	86.8	85.8
Nov-16	73.1	84.4	79.5	85.0	87.3	86.2
Dec-16	71.5	82.8	78.6	84.4	86.4	85.1
Jan-17	71.9	83.5	78.9	85.9	86.6	85.7
Feb-17	72.8	85.1	81.6	87.5	89.6	87.0
Mar-17	73.8	85.7	85.3	88.9	90.3	88.0

Source: Referral to treatment times (RTT), NHS Wales Informatics Service (NWIS)

- (a) Allied health professional services and diagnostic services have been excluded from this analysis, although they are included in the all treatment functions figure
 (b) The vertical axis is the same for all charts.

- None of the five treatment functions with most patient pathways waiting to start treatment met the 26 or 36 week target in any month within 2016-17.
- Trauma and orthopaedics had the lowest percentage of patients waiting less than 26 weeks in each month of 2016-17.
- All of the 5 treatment functions shown in table 3 increased the percentage of patient pathways waiting less than 26 weeks for treatment overall in 2016-17, this is reflected in the national figure.

Chart 5: Performance of the five treatment functions with the most patient pathways against the 26 week target, September 2011 onwards



*Please note this chart does not start at zero

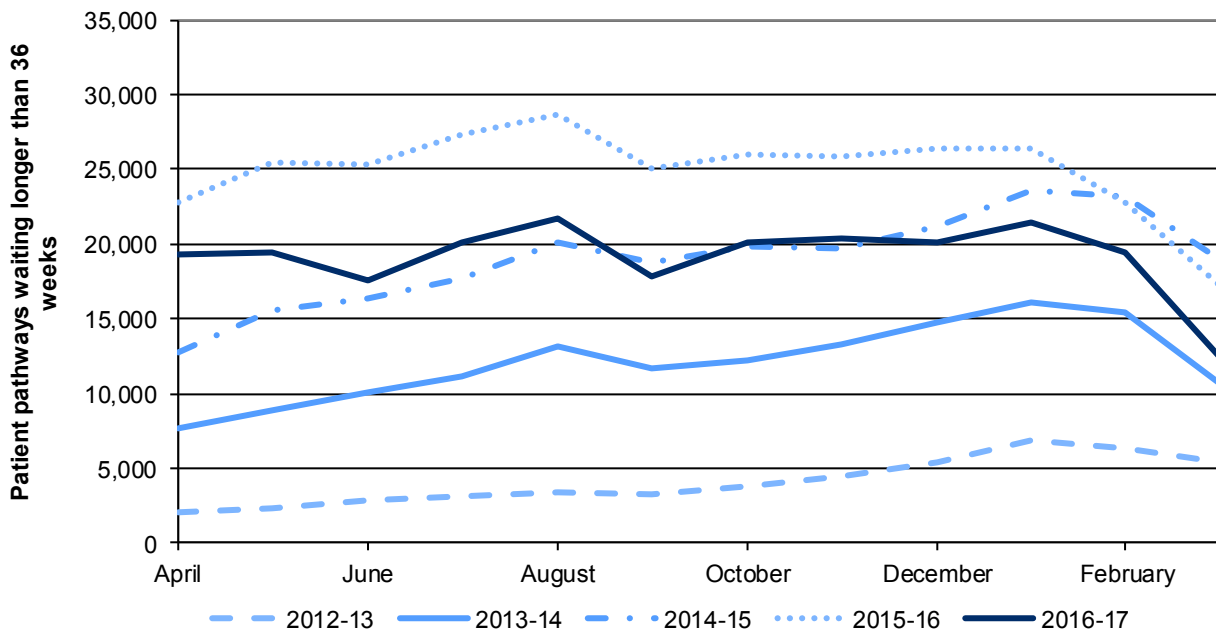
Source: Referral to treatment times (RTT), NHS Wales Informatics Services (NWIS)

Chart 5 shows the performance of the five treatment functions with the most patient pathways against the 26 week target since September 2011.

- The five treatment functions show a gradual decline away from the target from the summer months of 2012 although all of them have shown an improvement since 2016.
- From September 2011 to July 2012 trauma and orthopaedic performance improved from below 80 per cent to almost 90 per cent, before gradually declining to its lowest point of 70.7 per cent in January 2016. Since then, it has remained between 70 and 75 per cent each

Section 2: Performance against the 36 week target

Chart 6: Patient pathways waiting more than 36 weeks to start treatment by financial year 2012-13 onwards



Source: Referral to treatment times (RTT), NHS Wales Informatics Services (NWIS)

Chart 6 shows the number of patient pathways waiting 36 weeks and over to start treatment by financial year, 2012-13 onwards.

- There are generally two spikes throughout the year where there are the most patient pathways waiting more than 36 weeks to start treatment, these occur in August and January.
- The best performance each year is generally seen in March.

Table 4: Number of patient pathways waiting longer than 36 weeks to start treatment, by LHB 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	4,140	0	4,652	4,156	1,392	2,481	2,537	19,358
May-16	4,078	0	4,798	4,003	1,416	2,347	2,804	19,446
Jun-16	4,195	0	4,788	3,803	989	2,260	1,576	17,611
Jul-16	4,657	0	5,002	3,981	1,148	2,328	2,959	20,075
Aug-16	4,960	0	5,192	4,148	1,426	2,420	3,517	21,663
Sep-16	4,575	0	4,852	3,692	1,038	2,233	1,451	17,841
Oct-16	5,088	0	4,809	3,764	1,203	2,556	2,722	20,142
Nov-16	5,575	0	4,730	3,817	1,138	2,479	2,646	20,385
Dec-16	6,296	0	5,040	3,990	1,154	2,320	1,351	20,151
Jan-17	6,401	0	4,827	4,223	962	2,246	2,727	21,386
Feb-17	5,848	0	4,059	4,253	698	1,769	2,768	19,395
Mar-17	4,082	0	2,666	3,485	0	975	1,146	12,354

Source: Referral to treatment times (RTT), NHS Wales Informatics Services (NWIS)

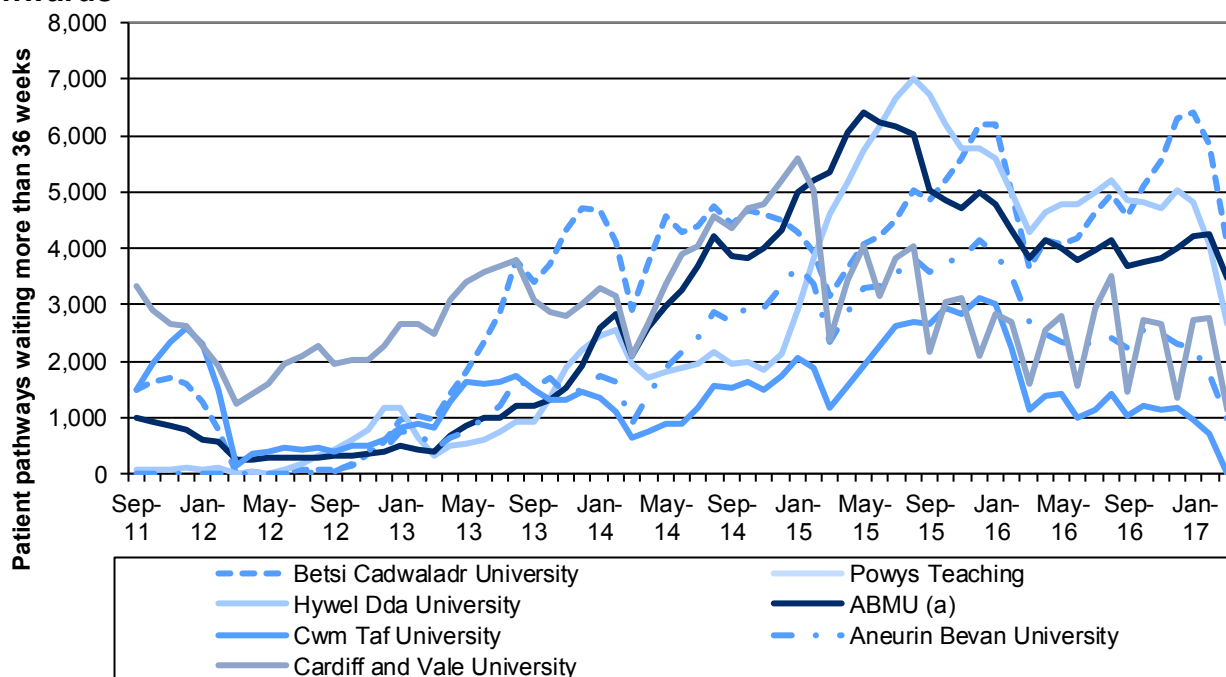
(a) Abertawe Bro Morgannwg University

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

Table 4 shows the total number of patient pathways that exceeded the 36 week target by each LHB for each month in 2016-17.

- The total number of pathways waiting more than 36 weeks decreased by all health boards through 2016-17 with the exception of Powys Teaching LHB which already met the target of 0 pathways waiting in excess of 36 weeks and did so for every month of the year.
- By the end of the year Cwm Taf was had no patient pathways over the 36 week target; starting the year with 1,392 pathways waiting over 36 weeks in April 2016. They were the only other health board in addition to Powys to meet the target at the close of the year.
- The total number of patient pathways waiting longer than 36 weeks in March 2017 (12,354) was the best seen in the financial year and the best since March 2014 which had 10,586 patient pathways waiting more than 36 weeks.

Chart 7: Total patient pathways over the 36 week target by LHB, September 2011 onwards



Source: Referral to treatment times (RTT), NHS Wales Informatics Services (NWIS)

(a) Abertawe Bro Morgannwg University

Chart 7 shows patient pathways waiting more than the 36 week target by LHB since September 2011.

- Patient pathways waiting more than the 36 week target increased steadily for all health boards with the exception of Powys (who have historically only had 7 pathways exceed 36 weeks since the target was established). Powys has maintained the target since July 2014.
- Hywel Dda Health Board had the highest number of patient pathways exceeding the 36 week target on record of 7,023 breaches in August 2015; they have since improved to 2,666 pathways waiting more than 36 weeks in March 2017, a reduction of 62.0 per cent.
- Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board saw the highest number of monthly breaches in the latest financial year of 6,401 patient pathways waiting more than 36 weeks in January 2017; they have since improved to 4,082 breaches in March 2017 which makes up 33.0 per cent of the total pathways waiting longer than 36 weeks in Wales for that month.

Table 5: Number of patient pathways waiting over 36 weeks by treatment function, 2016-17

	Service					All Treatment Functions
	Trauma and Orthopaedics	General Surgery	Ophthalmology	Ear, Nose and Throat	Dermatology	
Monthly charts (a)						
Apr-16	8,674	2,676	3,023	1,401	339	19,358
May-16	8,519	2,591	3,107	1,501	365	19,446
Jun-16	8,295	2,182	2,742	1,214	298	17,611
Jul-16	9,126	2,419	2,948	1,543	594	20,075
Aug-16	9,473	2,488	3,338	1,717	863	21,663
Sep-16	8,386	2,056	2,656	1,157	535	17,841
Oct-16	8,699	2,333	3,038	1,375	730	20,142
Nov-16	8,659	2,274	3,218	1,401	699	20,385
Dec-16	8,627	2,204	3,296	1,480	420	20,151
Jan-17	9,161	2,497	3,379	1,576	491	21,386
Feb-17	9,054	2,272	2,837	1,344	306	19,395
Mar-17	7,569	1,382	756	900	0	12,354

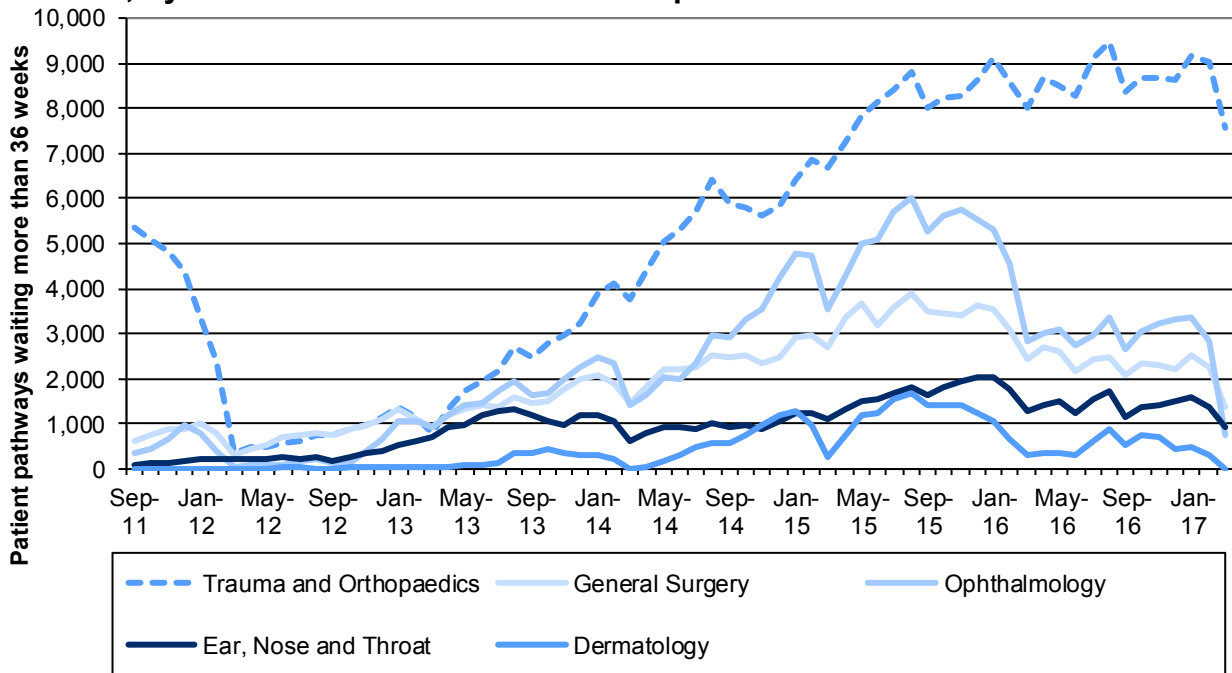
Source: Referral to treatment times (RTT), NHS Wales Informatics Services (NWIS)

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

Table 5 highlights the total number of patient pathways waiting in excess of the 36 week target by month for 2016-17, broken down by selected treatment functions.

- Trauma and orthopaedics is by far the greatest contributor to patient pathways waiting in excess of the 36 week target, with 61.3 per cent of all waits over 36 weeks in Wales in March 2017.
- All 5 treatment functions reduced the total number of pathways exceeding 36 weeks to start treatment throughout the course of the year. Dermatology had no pathways waiting longer than 36 weeks in March 2017.
- Ophthalmology improved over 2016-17 with 756 patient pathways waiting more than 36 weeks in March 2017, a reduction of 2,267 pathways (75.0 per cent) compared to April 2016.

Chart 8: Number of patient pathways waiting longer than 36 weeks to start treatment, by selected treatment functions September 2011 onwards



Source: Referral to treatment times (RTT), NHS Wales Informatics Services (NWIS)

Chart 8 highlights the total number of patient pathways waiting longer than 36 weeks to start treatment by selected treatment functions, September 2011 onwards.

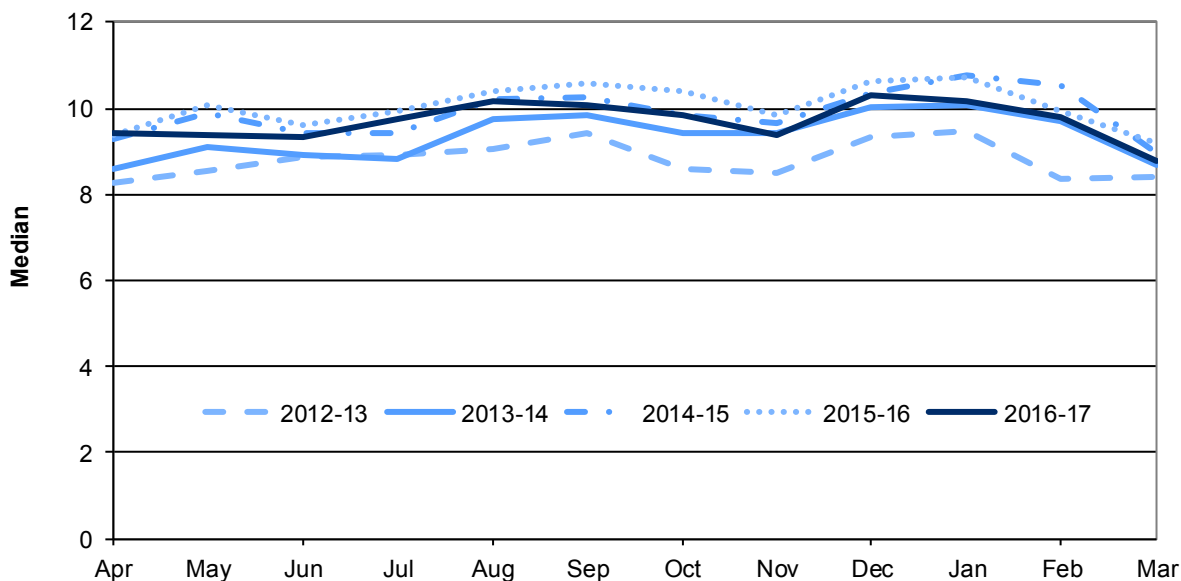
- Trauma and orthopaedics had the largest number of patient pathways over the 36 week target in September 2011 but improved to 2012-13. However since April 2013 it has had the most pathways waiting longer than 36 weeks.
- Ophthalmology increased in the number of patient pathways waiting longer than 36 weeks to start treatment between September 2012 and August 2016 where it peaked before steadily decreasing to March 2017, the lowest since December 2012.

Section 3: Context

The following charts and tables present information on stage of pathway and median waiting times. The [Welsh Audit Office](#)¹ made a series of recommendations regarding referral to treatment, one of which was to include more information in the statistical release, such as median waiting times and information on stage of pathway. This section gives that information providing greater context to the waiting times figures.

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.

Chart 9: Median waiting time to start treatment, by financial year 2012-13 onwards



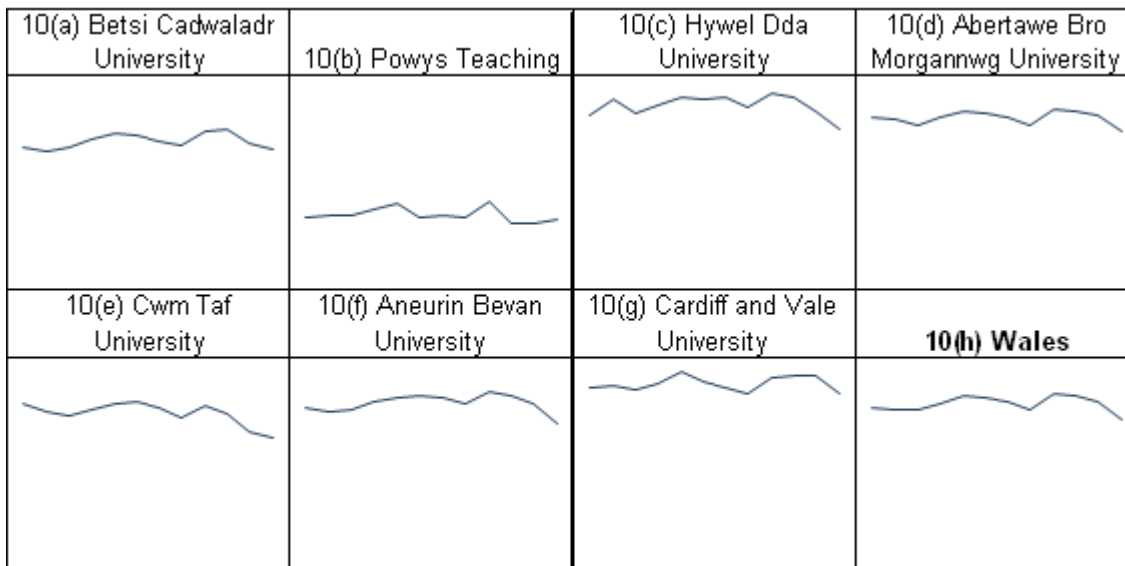
Source: Referral to treatment times (RTT), NHS Wales Informatics Services (NWIS)

Chart 9 shows the median waiting time to start treatment, by financial year.

- Since 2012-13, the median has been increasing year on year, although medians in 2016-17 were less than in 2015-16 overall.
- There were peaks in the winter months each year, with January 2015 seeing the longest median waiting time over the time period (10.8 weeks). Generally the shortest medians each financial year falls in March.

¹ [NHS Waiting Times for Elective Care in Wales](#)

Charts 10(a)-(h): Median waiting times to start treatment by LHB of provider, 2016-17
(a)



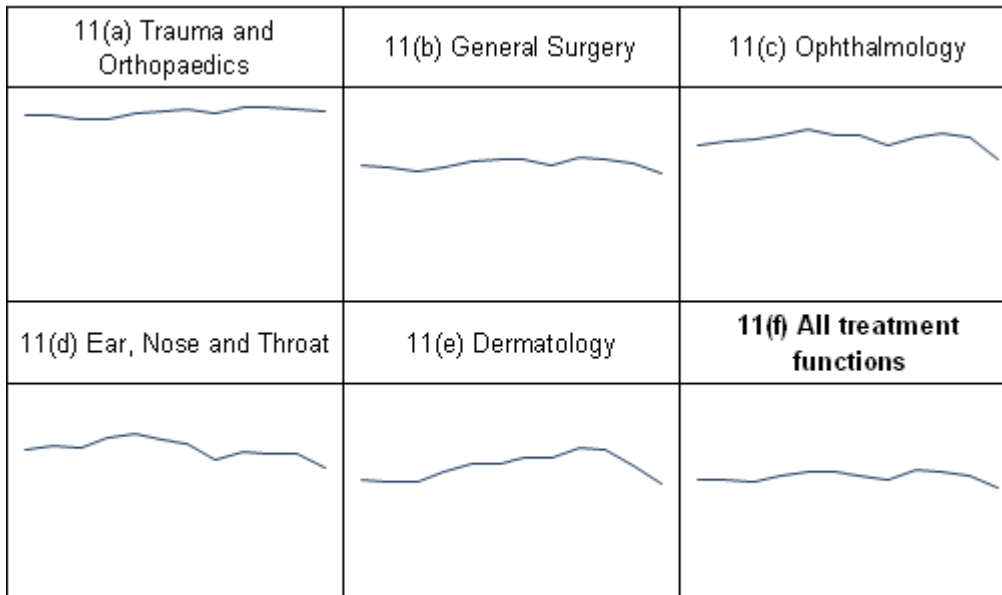
Source: Referral to treatment times (RTT), NHS Wales Informatics Services (NWIS)

(a) The charts vertical axis runs from 0 to 12 weeks.

Charts 10(a)–(h) shows the median waiting time for patient pathways waiting to start treatment over 2016-17:

- Powys Teaching LHB had the shortest medians throughout the year; Hywel Dda and Cardiff and Vale LHBs have had the longest medians throughout the year.
- For some health boards, there was a slight increase in medians throughout the year, but all health boards with the exception of Powys saw drops in 2017.

Charts 11(a)–(f): Median waiting times to start treatment of selected treatment functions, 2016-17 (a)(b)



Source: Referral to treatment times (RTT), NHS Wales Informatics Services (NWIS)

- (a) Allied health professional services and diagnostic services have been excluded from this analysis, although they are included in the Wales figure.
- (b) The charts vertical axis runs from 0 to 17 weeks.

Charts 11(a)–(f) shows the median waiting times to start treatment by selected treatment functions:

Out of the five selected treatment functions:

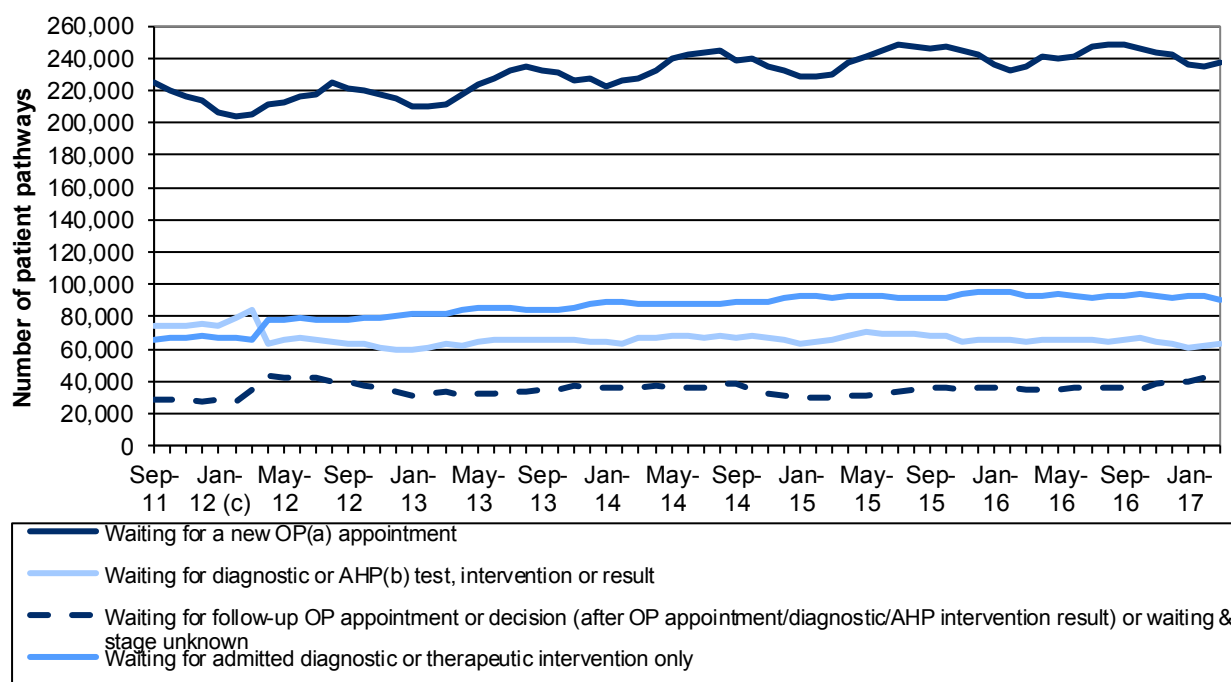
- Trauma and orthopaedics consistently has the longest median waiting time of all treatment functions.
- The median for all treatment functions with the exception of trauma and orthopaedics have decreased over the course of 2016-17.

Stage of pathway

The stage of pathway is used to identify the point along the entire patient pathway at which a patient is currently waiting in respect of their overall diagnosis and treatment. Patients can enter at different stages of the pathway, but they cannot go backwards on it.

A more detailed explanation of the stages of pathway can be found in the [Key quality information](#) section.

Chart 12: Number of patient pathways waiting to start treatment, by stage of pathway, September 2011 onwards



Source: Referral to treatment times (RTT), NHS Wales Informatics Services (NWIS)

(a) OP=Outpatient

(b) AHP=Allied Health Professional

(c) Figures include a known estimate. See Key Quality Information for further details.

- The chart shows that most patient pathways are waiting for a new outpatient appointment.
- Since December 2011, there has been an increase of around 28,000 in those waiting for a new outpatient appointment. This accounts for over half of the increase in the overall total for patient pathways waiting to start treatment.
- During the period covered in the chart here has been a decrease in those waiting for a diagnostic or allied health professional test, intervention or result.

Table 6: Performance against the 26 and 36 week targets, by stage of patient pathways, 2016-17

	Stage of pathway							
	Waiting for new OP appointment		Waiting for diagnostic or AHP test, intervention or result		Waiting for follow-up OP appointment or decision (after OP appointment/diagnostic/AHP intervention result) or waiting & stage unknown		Waiting for admitted diagnostic or therapeutic intervention only	
	Percentage waiting less than 26 weeks	Patients waiting longer than 36 weeks	Percentage waiting less than 26 weeks	Patients waiting longer than 36 weeks	Percentage waiting less than 26 weeks	Patients waiting longer than 36 weeks	Percentage waiting less than 26 weeks	Patients waiting longer than 36 weeks
Apr-16	91.6	2,756	94.7	931	82.1	1,433	68.2	14,238
May-16	91.2	2,905	94.9	881	81.9	1,444	68.2	14,216
Jun-16	92.1	2,467	95.1	795	84.8	922	69.4	13,427
Jul-16	91.6	3,580	95.3	853	84.8	1,320	68.8	14,322
Aug-16	90.6	4,101	95.0	918	82.2	1,475	67.5	15,169
Sep-16	90.7	3,157	95.3	734	83.6	846	68.5	13,104
Oct-16	90.4	4,089	95.3	725	83.2	1,342	67.9	13,986
Nov-16	90.8	4,148	95.3	732	83.4	1,543	68.7	13,962
Dec-16	90.0	3,958	94.4	813	82.1	1,551	67.2	13,829
Jan-17	90.6	3,976	94.9	821	84.5	1,868	67.8	14,721
Feb-17	92.2	2,735	95.3	712	84.8	1,669	69.0	14,279
Mar-17	92.8	833	95.3	551	84.2	668	71.9	10,302

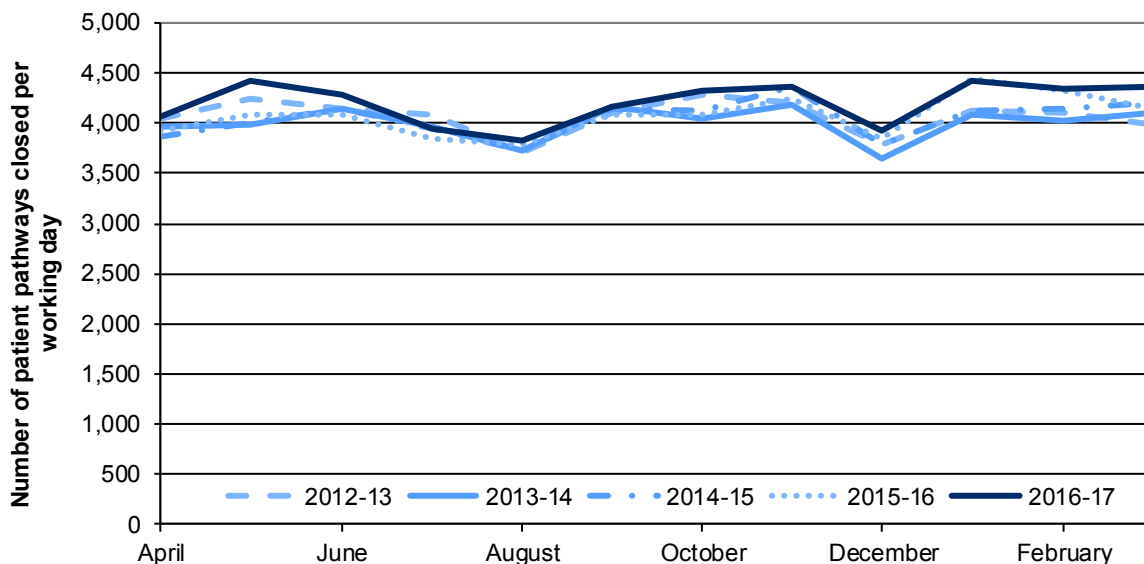
Source: Referral to treatment times (RTT), NHS Wales Informatics Services (NWIS)

- Performance for each stage of pathway is consistent throughout the year with those waiting for a new OP appointment or waiting for diagnostic or AHP test, intervention of result most likely to be waiting less than 26 weeks. Over 95% of patient pathways waiting for diagnostic or AHP test, intervention or results were seen within 26 weeks for 8 of the last 12 months. For those waiting for a new OP appointment, all months have over 90 per cent of patient pathways waiting less than 26 weeks.
- Performance is generally lower with the other two stages of pathway. See [key quality information](#) for further information on the stage of pathways.

Closed pathways

There is no target relating to closed pathways. However, we have included this section for contextual information. A patient pathway can be closed for a number of different reasons. Please see the [Key quality information](#) section for more information.

Chart 13: Closed patient pathways per working day, by financial year 2012-13 onwards (a)



Source: Referral to treatment times (RTT), NHS Wales Informatics Services (NWIS)

(a) This analysis excludes closed patient pathways with unknown treatment start clock date

Chart 13 shows how the total number of patient pathways closed per month and the number of patient pathways closed per working day change over time.

- It can be seen that the number of patient pathways closed per working day varies throughout the year, with the numbers tending to be lower in August and December.

Table 7: Patient pathways closed by LHB provider 2012-13 onwards

	Local Health Board (area of provider)							Wales
	Betsi Cadwaladr University	Powys Teaching	Hywel Dda University	ABMU (a)	Cwm Taf University	Aneurin Bevan University	Cardiff and Vale University	
Annual Charts (b)								
2012 - 13	159,990	12,485	133,117	219,734	116,590	205,942	170,489	1,018,347
2013 - 14	159,027	12,272	142,662	209,103	121,586	198,745	174,542	1,017,937
2014 - 15	168,424	13,598	146,382	202,645	124,138	196,763	172,510	1,024,460
2015 - 16	166,317	14,217	144,980	199,878	114,010	205,885	182,116	1,027,403
2016 - 17	178,570	14,488	143,464	205,353	131,122	210,769	189,786	1,073,552

Source: Referral to treatment times (RTT), NHS Wales Informatics Services (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 7 shows the patient pathways closed per financial year by LHB of provider, 2012-13 onwards.

- Each year in Wales over 1,000,000 patient pathways are closed.
- Total pathways closed have been increasing over the last 5 years with an overall increase of 5.4 per cent.
- Over the last 5 years all health boards have closed more pathways apart from Abertawe Bro Morgannwg University, which has seen a decrease in total pathways closed overall, but a slight increase in the most recent year.

Table 8: Patient pathways closed per financial year by selected treatment functions 2012-13 onwards

	Treatment Function					All Treatment Functions
	Trauma and Orthopaedics	General Surgery	Ophthalmology	Ear, Nose and Throat	Dermatology	
Annual Charts (a)						
2012 - 13	134,834	125,797	101,614	82,240	70,957	1,018,347
2013 - 14	119,499	128,169	97,846	83,868	75,228	1,017,937
2014 - 15	119,454	129,309	96,018	87,614	74,232	1,024,460
2015 - 16	118,982	132,163	97,775	92,277	76,255	1,027,403
2016 - 17	124,903	138,453	103,895	96,847	79,828	1,073,552

Source: Referral to treatment times (RTT), NHS Wales Informatics Services (NWIS)

(a) The vertical axis for the charts is the same for all treatment functions, but the All Treatments chart uses a different scale.

Table 8 shows the total number of patients pathways closed per financial year by selected treatment functions 2012-13 onwards.

- In general closed pathways have increased year on year, it is worth noting that numbers of closed pathways throughout a year generally corresponds with improvements in patient waiting for that particular service. For example, in 2012-13 a large number of patient pathways waiting for trauma and orthopaedics services were closed compared to the following years.
- Ophthalmology had an increase in closed pathways over 2016-17 which corresponds with a large reduction in pathways waiting more than 36 weeks.
- Dermatology also had a slight increase in closed pathways (with reasonably good performance) and had no patient pathways waiting over 36 weeks.

Section 4: Treatment functions not covered by RTT reporting

Some specific services are excluded from referral to treatment times reporting. These are palliative care, mental health hospital services and inpatient/day-case dentistry. For orthodontics and restorative dentistry, the first outpatient appointment is included in RTT reporting. The treatment functions not covered by RTT reporting have specific standards. Details can be found in the [FAQ](#).

Table 9: Waiting times for hospital admissions and outpatient appointments, 2016-17 (a)

	Patient pathways waiting (b)					
	Total waiting for admission to hospital as an inpatient or day case			Total waiting for a first outpatient appointment		
	Number waiting over 14 weeks	Percentage waiting over 14 weeks	Number waiting over 10 weeks	Percentage waiting over 10 weeks	Number waiting over 10 weeks	Percentage waiting over 10 weeks
Apr-16	440	277	63.0	2,752	453	16.5
May-16	457	306	67.0	2,667	455	17.1
Jun-16	448	306	68.3	2,506	375	15.0
Jul-16	453	303	66.9	2,477	345	13.9
Aug-16	456	300	65.8	2,491	347	13.9
Sep-16	462	305	66.0	2,549	424	16.6
Oct-16	461	303	65.7	2,634	363	13.8
Nov-16	466	314	67.4	2,494	331	13.3
Dec-16	471	327	69.4	2,642	366	13.9
Jan-17	481	342	71.1	2,581	351	13.6
Feb-17	524	358	68.3	2,505	375	15.0
Mar-17	542	352	64.9	2,444	286	11.7

Source: Referral to Treatment times (RTT), NHS Wales Informatics Service (NWIS)

- (a) For a list of treatment functions reported in this section, not included in RTT reporting, see the waiting times FAQ.
- (b) Excludes Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).

Table 9 shows the number of patient pathways waiting for hospital admissions and outpatient appointments for non RTT treatment functions throughout 2016-17.

- Those waiting for an inpatient/day-case fluctuated throughout the year from a low of 440 in April 2016 to a high of 542 in March 2017. Those waiting for a first outpatient appointment varied between 2,400 and 2,800 patients waiting per month throughout 2016-17.
- The percentage waiting over 14 weeks for an inpatient/day-case admission varied throughout the year with a low of 63.0 per cent of patient pathways waiting more than 14 weeks in April 2016, and a high of 71.1 per cent of patient pathways waiting more than 14 weeks to start treatment in January 2017.
- Percentage of those waiting longer than 10 weeks for a first outpatient appointment was lowest in March 2017, of only 11.7 per cent of patient pathways waited longer than 10 weeks for their first outpatient appointment to a high in May 2016 of 17.1 per cent waiting more than 10 weeks.

This section includes waiting times for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). The operational standard for this service is that 80 per cent of patients should wait no longer than 28 days (4 weeks) from the date the referral is received by the hospital to a first outpatient appointment.

Prior to March 2017 the numbers waiting for CAMHS at Cwm Taf which are provider based (and include ABMU and Cardiff and Vale figures) include non-CAMHS pathways which should not be included, therefore the current figures overstate the numbers waiting. The figures for March 2017 are correct. We have a detailed breakdown for March 2017 but are unable to make any comparisons with previous data.

Table 10: Waiting times for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service by Local Health Board in March 2017

	Local Health Board					Wales
	Betsi Cadwaladr University	Powys Teaching LHB	Hywel Dda University	Cwm Taf University LHB	Aneurin Bevan	
Up to 4 weeks	80	3	7	317	104	511
4 to 26 weeks	10	2	0	0	61	73
Over 26 weeks	0	0	0	0	3	3
Total	90	5	7	317	168	587
Percentage waiting less than 4 weeks	88.9	60.0	100.0	100.0	61.9	87.1

Source: Referral to Treatment times (RTT), NHS Wales Informatics Service (NWIS)

Table 10 shows the number of patient pathways waiting for a first outpatient appointment for child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) in March 2017. Please note that Cwm Taf provides child and adolescent mental health services on behalf of Abertawe Bro Morgannwg and Cardiff and Vale health boards.

- Cwm Taf and Hywel Dda had no patients wait over 4 weeks to start treatment for a CAMHS service.
- The target for CAMHS was met in March 2017 with performance at 87.1 per cent.

Key quality information

We publish a detailed [quality report](#) on NHS Wales Referral to treatment time statistics. This includes information on definitions and coverage, as well as other aspects of quality such as timeliness, relevance and comparability, and 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 referral to treatment 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.

Coverage

Data on Welsh residents treated or waiting for treatment outside of Wales is not included in this release.

The time series in this release start at September 2011. This is because from this date onwards local health boards submitted a combined RTT return rather than separate main RTT and Cardiac RTT returns as they had done previously.

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.

Stage of pathway

The stage of pathway is used to identify the point at which a patient is currently waiting in respect of their overall diagnosis and treatment, along the entire patient pathway.

Below are the stages of pathway.

- stage 1 -waiting for a new outpatient appointment. A new outpatient appointment may come from any referral source. A patient will be at Stage 1 only once.
- stage 2 -waiting for a diagnostic of a diagnostic or Allied Health Professional (AHP) test, intervention or result.
- stage 3 - waiting for a follow-up outpatient appointment or waiting for a decision following:
 - 1) An outpatient appointment.
 - 2) A diagnostic or AHP intervention result.
 - 3) Or where the patient is waiting and the stage is uncertain/unknown.
- also stage 3 -waiting for an admitted diagnostic or therapeutic intervention (i.e. treatment) only.
- stage 4 -closed pathway. This includes:
 - 1) Patient pathways treated
 - 2) Patient pathways who no longer wanted to be seen
 - 3) Deceased patient pathways

It is not possible for a patient to move backwards on this pathway, but it is possible for patient pathways to enter the pathway at different points (e.g. if a patient has a private outpatient appointment, but decides to revert to the NHS for treatment then they could enter at the treatment stage of the pathway). If this occurs, the patient would still be subject to the 26 week RTT target.

Care should be taken when looking at closed pathway information, as this data is not validated by health boards.

Accuracy

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 a "(c)".

December 2011 to February 2012 figures for Aneurin Bevan for those waiting to start treatment and those treated, as well as March 2012 figures for those treated, are estimated using their data for November 2011. Also, the data since April 2012 for those treated is not fully validated. This is following the implementation of a new Patient Administration System at the end of 2011. Due to technical difficulties, Aneurin Bevan were unable to run the report to provide figures for those patient pathways treated for June and July 2012 and to avoid not submitting any figures, the figures for those treated that were previously submitted for May 2012 have been used as estimates.

October 2015 figures for the specialities Allied Health Professionals and Diagnostic Services for the Cwm Taf University LHB could not be accurately provided. Therefore, figures for September 2015 have been used as estimates.

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.

Public sector strike

The public sector strikes on 30 November 2011 and 10 May 2012 will have had an effect on performance in the November 2011 and May 2012 figures, respectively, as many outpatient appointments and routine operations were cancelled for that date.

Doctors' strikes – 21 June 2012

Referral to Treatment 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

England, Scotland and Wales publish referral to treatment waiting times – which measures the complete patient pathway from initial referral e.g. by a GP, to agreed treatment or discharge - in addition to certain stages of treatment waiting times. Northern Ireland publish waiting times statistics for the inpatient, outpatient and diagnostics stages of treatment – which measures waiting times for the different stages of the patient pathway, typically specific waits for outpatient, diagnostic or inpatient treatment, or for specific services such as audiology.

In relation to referral to treatment waiting times, whilst there are similar concepts in England, Wales and Scotland in terms of measuring waiting times from the receipt of referral by the hospital to the start of treatment, and, the types of patient pathways included, there are distinct differences in the individual rules around measuring waiting times. This is particularly important regarding ‘when the clock stops or pauses’, exemptions, and the specialities covered.

Data on NHS Wales referral to treatment times is available on [StatsWales](#).

Data on NHS England referral to treatment times is available on the [NHS England website](#).

Data on NHS Scotland referral to treatment 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/referral-to-treatment-times/?lang=en>

Next update

July 2018 (provisional).

We want your feedback

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

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