

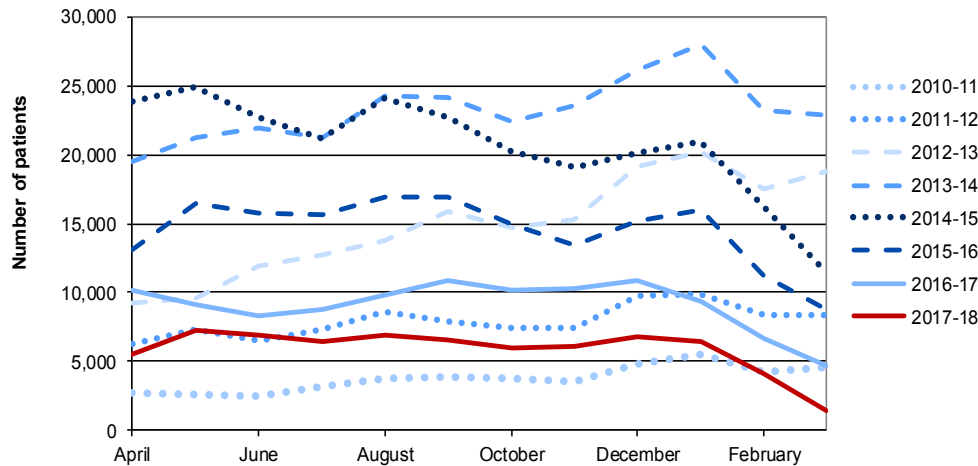


NHS Wales diagnostic and therapy services waiting times: 2017-18

28 June 2018
SB 38/2018

Key points

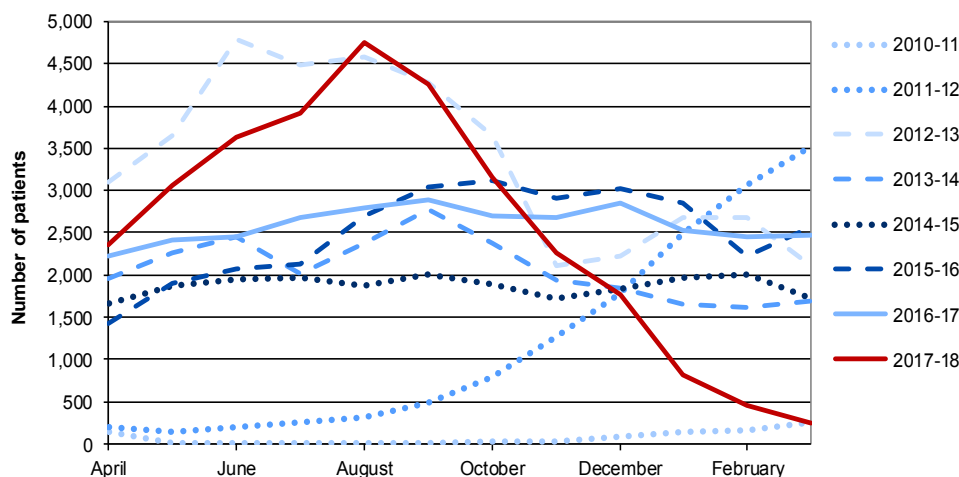
Chart 1: Number of patients waiting over 8 weeks for diagnostic services by financial year, 2010-11 onwards



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

2017-18 had the lowest number of patients waiting over 8 weeks for diagnostic services over the last five years: see the [summary](#) for more information.

Chart 2: Number of patients waiting over 14 weeks for therapy services by financial year, 2010-11 onwards



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

Over 2017-18, the number of patients waiting longer than 14 weeks for therapy services rose and then fell considerably: see the [summary](#) for more information.

About this bulletin

This Statistical Bulletin presents summary information on the reported numbers of patients waiting for NHS diagnostic and therapy services in Wales. 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. This information is published monthly along with other key indicators as part of the [NHS Activity and Performance Summary](#).

In this bulletin

Summary	5
Diagnostic services	9
Therapy services	16
Key quality info	24

Contents

Introduction	4
Summary	5
Diagnostics.....	5
Therapies	5
Diagnostic and Therapy Services overview	7
Performance.....	7
Chart 3: Number of patients waiting over standard times for diagnostic and therapy services, October 2009 onwards.....	7
Context.....	8
Chart 4: Median waiting times for diagnostic and therapy services, October 2009 onwards	8
Diagnostic services	9
Performance.....	9
Table 1: Patients waiting and median waiting times for diagnostic services, 2017-18	9
Table 2: Number of patients waiting over 8 weeks by specified diagnostic service, 2017-18..	10
Chart 5: Number of patients waiting over 8 weeks by specified diagnostic service, October 2009 onwards	11
Table 3: Number of patients waiting over 8 weeks for specified diagnostic services by area of provider, 2017-18.....	12
Chart 6: Number of patients waiting over 8 weeks for diagnostic services by area of provider, October 2009 onwards.....	13
Context.....	14
Chart 7: Median waiting times for diagnostic services by financial year, 2010-11 onwards	14
Charts 8(a)-(h): Median waiting times by month for specified diagnostic services, 2017-18 ...	14
Charts 9(a)-(h): Median waiting times by month for diagnostic services by LHB provider, 2017-18	15
Therapy services	16
Performance.....	16
Table 4: Patients waiting and median waiting times for therapy services, 2017-18.....	16
Table 5: Number of patients waiting over 14 weeks by specified therapy service, 2017-18 (a)	17
Chart 10: Number of patients waiting over 14 weeks by specified therapy service, October 2009 onwards	18

Table 6: Number of patients waiting over 14 weeks for therapy services by area of provider, 2017-18 (a).....	19
Chart 11: Number of patients waiting over 14 weeks for therapy services by area of provider, October 2009 onwards.....	20
Context.....	21
Chart 12: Median waiting times for therapy services by financial year, 2010-11 onwards.....	21
Charts 13(a)-(h): Median waiting times by month for specified therapy services, 2017-18	22
Charts 14(a)-(h): Median waiting times by month for therapy services by area of provider, 2017-18	23
Key quality information	24

Introduction

[The NHS Outcomes Framework 2017-18](#) was used to measure delivery throughout 2017-18.

The diagnostic and therapy service statistics show monthly data on the number of people waiting and number of weeks waited at the end of each month for specific diagnostic and therapy services. They are reported by NHS local health boards (LHBs) and collected by the NHS Wales Informatics Service (NWIS). Waiting lists include all those patients, irrespective of their area of residence, who are waiting for NHS-funded diagnostic and therapy services within Wales.

The following table shows which diagnostic and therapy services are included in the waiting times statistics:

Diagnostic services	Therapy services
Cardiology	Arts Therapies
Diagnostic Endoscopy	Adult Hearing Aids
Imaging	Dietetics
Neurophysiology	Occupational Therapy
Physiological measurement	Physiotherapy
Radiology (consultant referral)	Podiatry
Radiology (GP referral)	Speech & Language Therapy

The waiting time is calculated from the date the referral request was received until the date on which:

- a) the diagnostic test for which the patient has been referred is carried out; or
- b) the hearing aid is fitted; or
- c) the patient commences the first treatment following an assessment or examination.

Note that the diagnostic and therapy service statistics are based on a snapshot at the end of each month; therefore monthly numbers should not be summed.

Targets

The targets relating to Diagnostic and Therapies are that no one should wait longer than 8 weeks for a diagnostic test, or more than 14 weeks for therapy services.

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 bulletin, [Referral to Treatment Times](#).

The analysis focuses on performance in the 2017-18 financial year but looks back over a longer time series to show long-term trends. Whilst data for diagnostic and therapy waiting times are available back to 2005 on [StatsWales](#), this bulletin focuses on October 2009 onwards as that is when the current health boards came into existence.

Context sections are provided to add value to some of the analysis.

Summary

Diagnostics

Performance

- Over the past five year period, 2017-18 has been the best year overall in terms of numbers waiting over 8 weeks, with the lowest point across the whole time series being reached in March 2018: see [Chart 1](#).
- The number of people waiting over 8 weeks in 2017-18 was higher than in the majority of months for 2010-11, but lower than 2011-12 for the majority of months.
- Aneurin Bevan Health Board has had the largest decrease of patients waiting more than 8 weeks over 2017-18, with over 3,000 patients waiting over the target time in April 2017 compared with less than 5 in March 2018. Consequently it went from having the majority of waits over 8 weeks at the start of the year to having almost none at the end of the year. There were smaller decreases across most other health boards.
- There was a large decrease in patients waiting more than 8 weeks for diagnostic endoscopy services over 2017-18, with 4,700 waiting in April compared with 1,100 in March. There were smaller decreases across most of the other services.

Context

- The median waiting times for diagnostic services in 2017-18 were among the shortest of the previous seven years, ranging between 2.5 weeks and 3.5 weeks: see [Chart 7](#).
- Aneurin Bevan Health Board saw the largest decrease in median waiting times in 2017-18 compared to the start of the year.
- Diagnostic endoscopy services saw the largest decrease in median waiting times in 2017-18 compared to the start of the year.

Therapies

Performance

- 2017-18 has had a high level of variation in the number of patients waiting over 14 weeks for therapy services, having some of the highest and lowest monthly points compared with the previous seven year period. Although the numbers between April and October were generally greater than the previous seven years, performance improved from December, with numbers lower than the last six years: see [Chart 2](#).
- Hywel Dda University Health Board saw the largest decrease of patients waiting over the target time in 2017-18, with 1,740 waiting in April compared with 120 in March. There were smaller decreases across most other health boards.
- In 2017-18, podiatry and physiotherapy services accounted for the majority of waits over 14 weeks at the start of the year, but by March they had the least.

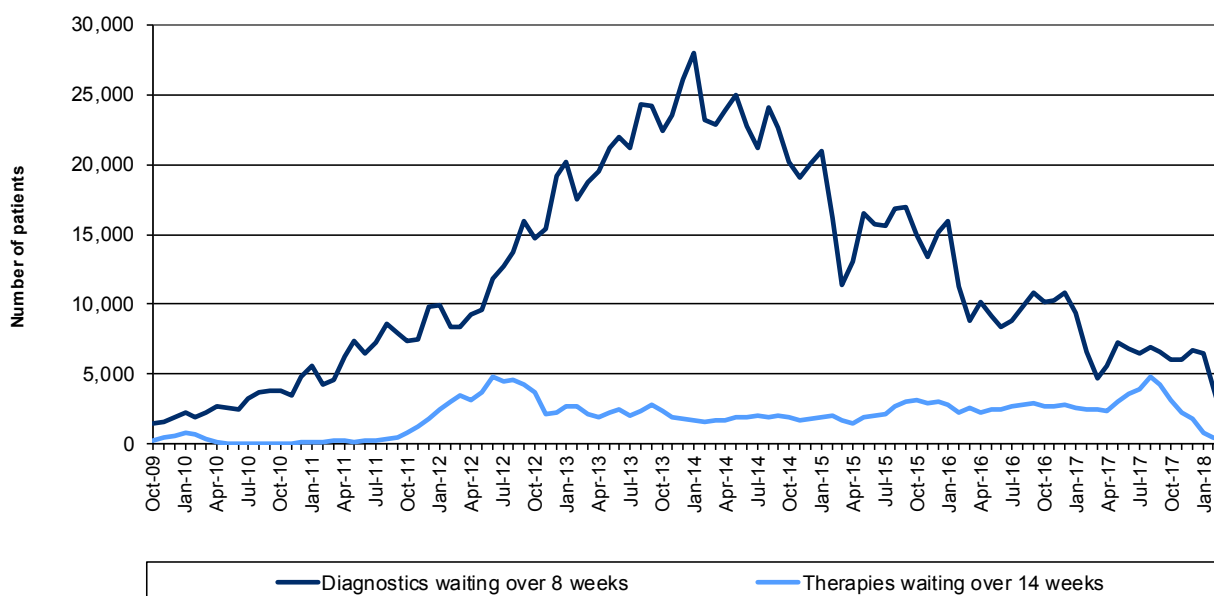
Context

- In 2017-18, the median waiting times for therapy services were among the longest of the previous seven years between April and September, but by January, the median times were among the shortest: see [Chart 12](#).
- Whilst all health boards saw a decrease in median waiting times for therapy services in 2017-18, Hywel Dda had the largest decrease over the year.

Diagnostic and Therapy Services overview

Performance

Chart 3: 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)

(a) Figures include known estimates. See [Estimates](#) for further details

Chart 3 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, peaking at 27,998. Since then there has been an overall decrease, with 1,466 waiting over 8 weeks in March 2018, the lowest for the overall period shown.
- The increase 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 2017-18 the majority of waits over 8 weeks were for diagnostic endoscopy.

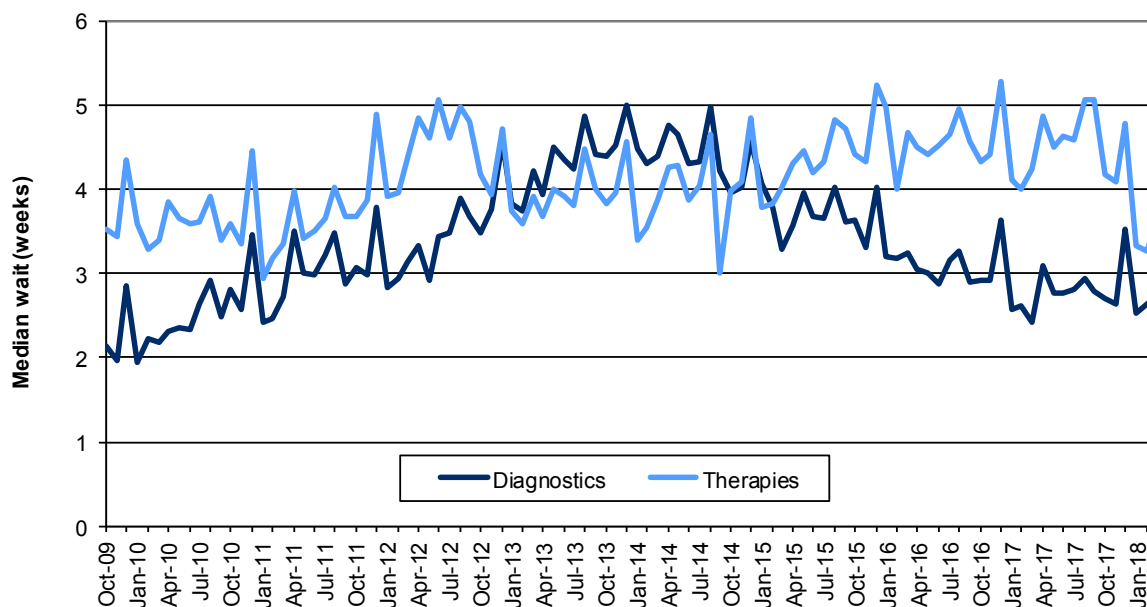
Therapy services:

- The number of patients waiting more than 14 weeks for therapy services remained under 1,000 from October 2009 until November 2011 but rose and peaked at 4,781 in June 2012. The number remained fairly stable between November 2012 and April 2017 before increasing to another peak in August 2017. Since then there has been an overall decrease, with 245 patients waiting over 14 weeks in March 2018, the lowest since June 2011.
- The small peak in January 2010 can be explained by an increase in podiatry waits at Aneurin Bevan. The increases between June 2011 and June 2012 and April 2017 and August 2017 were primarily a result of longer waits for physiotherapy services at some health boards.

Context

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 not affected by extreme values in the same way as the mean.

Chart 4: Median waiting times for diagnostic and therapy services, October 2009 onwards



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

(a) Figures include known estimates. See [Estimates](#) for further details

Chart 4 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 before falling from October 2017.
- 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.

The following sections provide a more detailed analysis of the diagnostic and therapy services data

Diagnostic services

Performance

Table 1: Patients waiting and median waiting times for diagnostic services, 2017-18

Month	Patients waiting			Percentage over 8 weeks	Median waiting time
	Total	Less than 8 weeks	8 weeks and over		
Apr-17	58,511	52,949	5,562	9.5	3.1
May-17	60,593	53,341	7,252	12.0	2.8
Jun-17	60,503	53,643	6,860	11.3	2.8
Jul-17	59,630	53,192	6,438	10.8	2.8
Aug-17	57,856	50,915	6,941	12.0	2.9
Sep-17	58,979	52,415	6,564	11.1	2.8
Oct-17	62,042	56,060	5,982	9.6	2.7
Nov-17	62,956	56,898	6,058	9.6	2.6
Dec-17	63,193	56,438	6,755	10.7	3.5
Jan-18	60,941	54,484	6,457	10.6	2.5
Feb-18	61,215	57,086	4,129	6.7	2.6
Mar-18	59,146	57,680	1,466	2.5	2.7

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 2017-18:

- The highest number of patients waiting more than 8 weeks occurred in May 2017, whilst the lowest number occurred in March 2018.
- The median waiting time peaked in December 2017 and reached its lowest point in January 2018.

Table 2: Number of patients waiting over 8 weeks by specified diagnostic service, 2017-18

	Service							All services
	Cardiology	Diagnostic endoscopy	Imaging	Neurophysiology	Physiological measurement	Radiology - Consultant referral	Radiology - GP referral	
Monthly charts (b)								
Apr-17	34	4,716	3	9	219	567	14	5,562
May-17	144	5,107	90	118	222	1,269	302	7,252
Jun-17	174	4,607	106	76	228	1,295	374	6,860
Jul-17	81	4,358	99	112	217	1,190	381	6,438
Aug-17	94	4,495	127	225	235	1,440	325	6,941
Sep-17	30	4,157	150	201	243	1,425	358	6,564
Oct-17	70	3,672	128	154	208	1,412	338	5,982
Nov-17	203	3,585	122	118	166	1,494	370	6,058
Dec-17	199	4,040	121	139	148	1,596	512	6,755
Jan-18	54	3,728	102	46	158	1,711	658	6,457
Feb-18	42	2,345	41	83	169	1,182	267	4,129
Mar-18	29	1,092	1	6	72	243	23	1,466

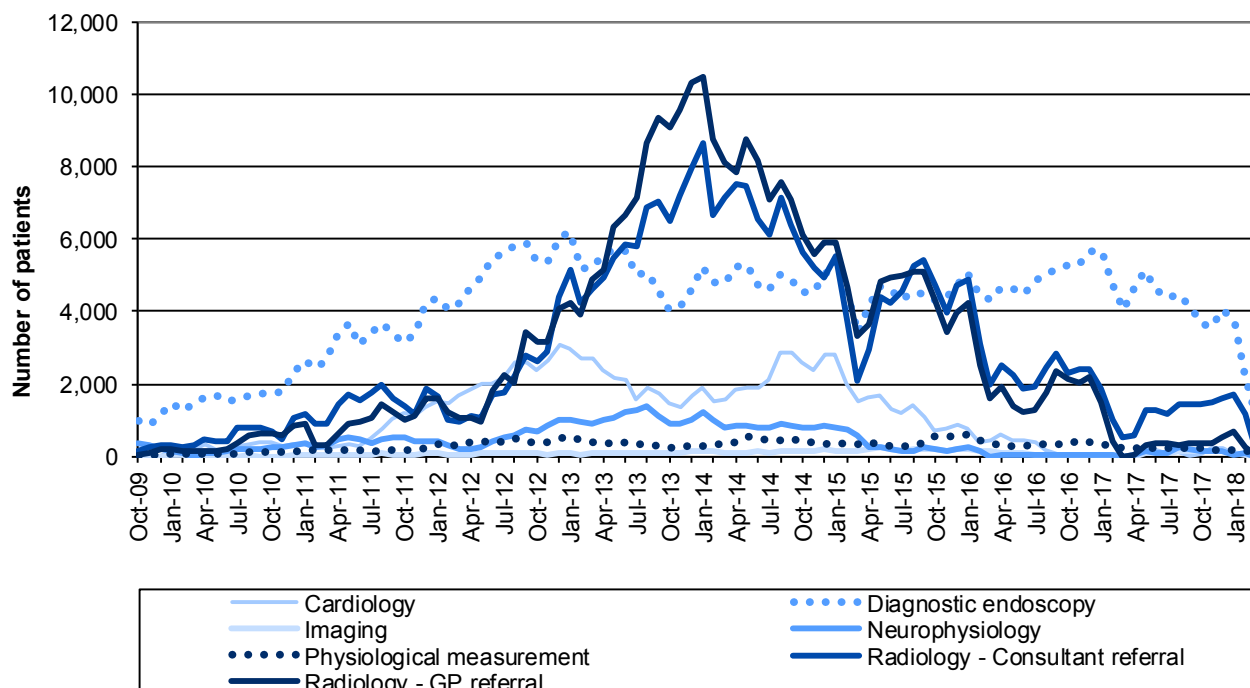
Source: Diagnostic and therapy services waiting times, NHS Wales Informatics Service (NWIS)

(a) 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 2017-18:

- The number of patients waiting over 8 weeks for diagnostic services declined for most services over the year compared to April 2017, with the sharpest falls coming in the months after December 2017. Diagnostic endoscopy services saw the biggest decline, although it still accounted for the majority of waits over 8 weeks at the end of the year.
- The trend for all services over the year resembles diagnostic endoscopy, as diagnostic endoscopy accounted for the majority of waits over 8 weeks during the year.
- The lowest point for most services occurred in March, reflecting the overall low shown in [Table 1](#).
- The pattern for specified diagnostic services in 2017-18 is broadly similar to the previous year.

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)

(a) Figures include known estimates. See [Estimates](#) for further details

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

- The number of patients waiting over the target time between October 2009 and January 2014 increased for all services. January 2014 was the peak month for overall services, as shown in [Chart 3](#), and also for both radiology (GP referral) and radiology (consultant referral). Since then there has been a decrease in this number for all services.
- The number of patients waiting over the target time for diagnostic endoscopy in March 2018, as shown in [Table 2](#), is the lowest since November 2009.

Table 3: Number of patients waiting over 8 weeks for specified diagnostic services by area of provider, 2017-18

	LHB provider							Wales
	Betsi		Abertawe Bro			Aneurin	Cardiff and	
	Cadwaladr	Powys	Hywel Dda	Morgannwg	Cwm Taf	Bevan	Vale	
Monthly charts (a)	University	Teaching	University	University	University	University	University	
Apr-17	17	1	0	411	92	3,072	1,969	5,562
May-17	132	2	15	519	1,079	3,590	1,915	7,252
Jun-17	92	3	35	484	1,212	3,392	1,642	6,860
Jul-17	139	0	39	533	1,181	2,895	1,651	6,438
Aug-17	344	0	28	651	1,347	2,566	2,005	6,941
Sep-17	444	7	0	455	1,483	2,205	1,970	6,564
Oct-17	497	2	0	349	1,504	1,780	1,850	5,982
Nov-17	620	0	0	361	1,522	1,485	2,070	6,058
Dec-17	1,123	1	0	576	1,676	1,510	1,869	6,755
Jan-18	1,400	1	0	473	1,500	1,261	1,822	6,457
Feb-18	1,052	1	66	278	1,071	550	1,111	4,129
Mar-18	476	4	0	29	72	2	883	1,466

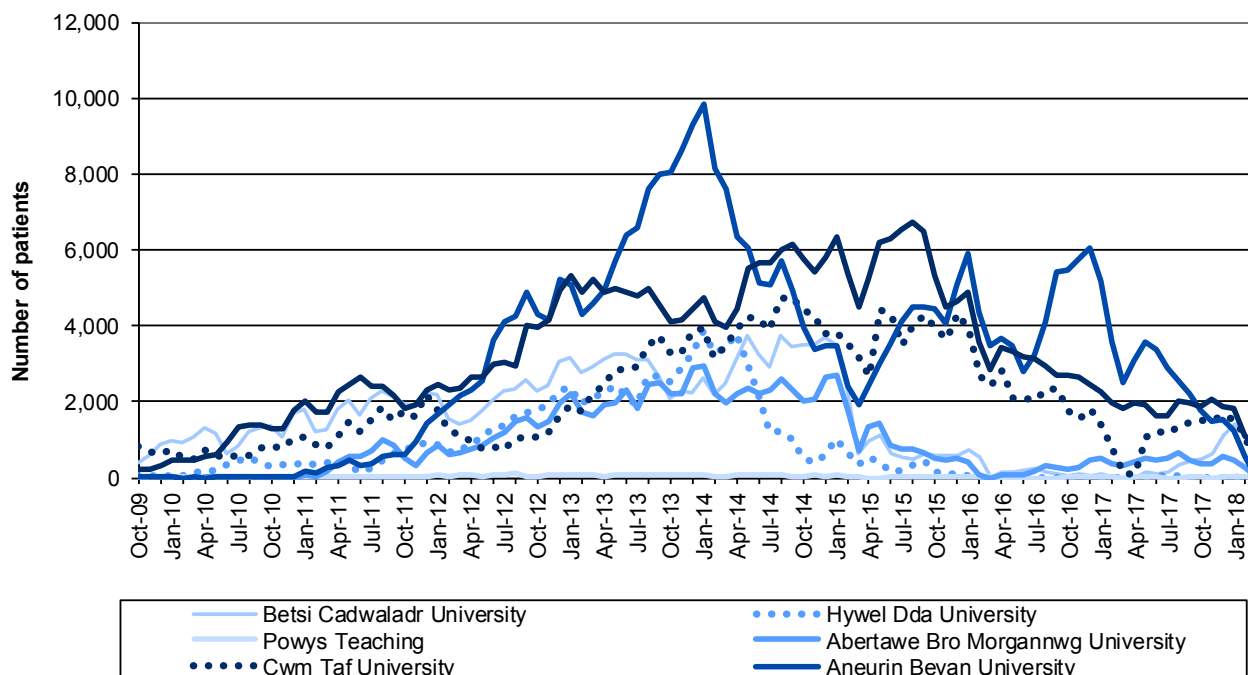
Source: Diagnostic and therapy services waiting times, NHS Wales Informatics Service (NWIS)

(a) 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 2017-18:

- The number of patients waiting over 8 weeks has decreased over 2017-18 for most health boards, with a significant decrease at Aneurin Bevan. Betsi Cadwaladr was the only health board where the number of patients waiting over 8 weeks increased when compared to the start of the year.
- At the start of the year, Aneurin Bevan accounted for 55.2 per cent of waits over 8 weeks, the highest of all health boards. By March 2018, Aneurin Bevan accounted for just 0.1 per cent of these waits due to a drop in waiting times for diagnostic endoscopy services.

Chart 6: 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)

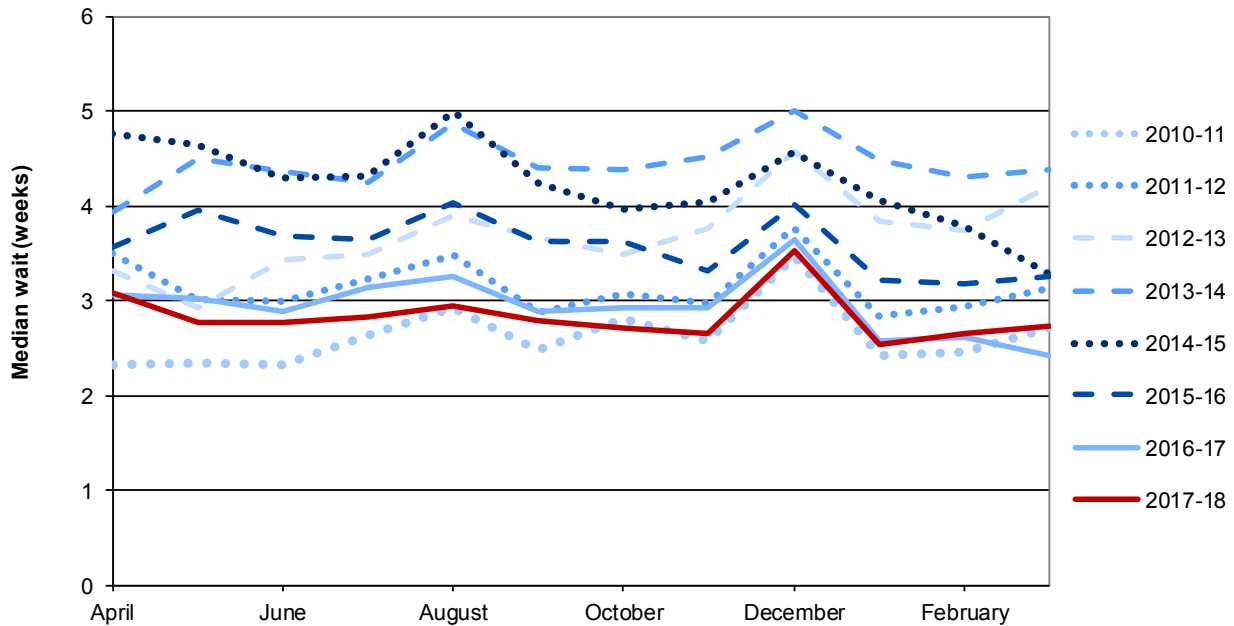
(a) Figures include known estimates. See [Estimates](#) for further details

Chart 6 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 falling again.
- The reduction at Cardiff and Vale health board over 2017-18 shown in [Table 3](#) was a continuation of an overall decline which began in 2015.

Context

Chart 7: Median waiting times for diagnostic services by financial year, 2010-11 onwards



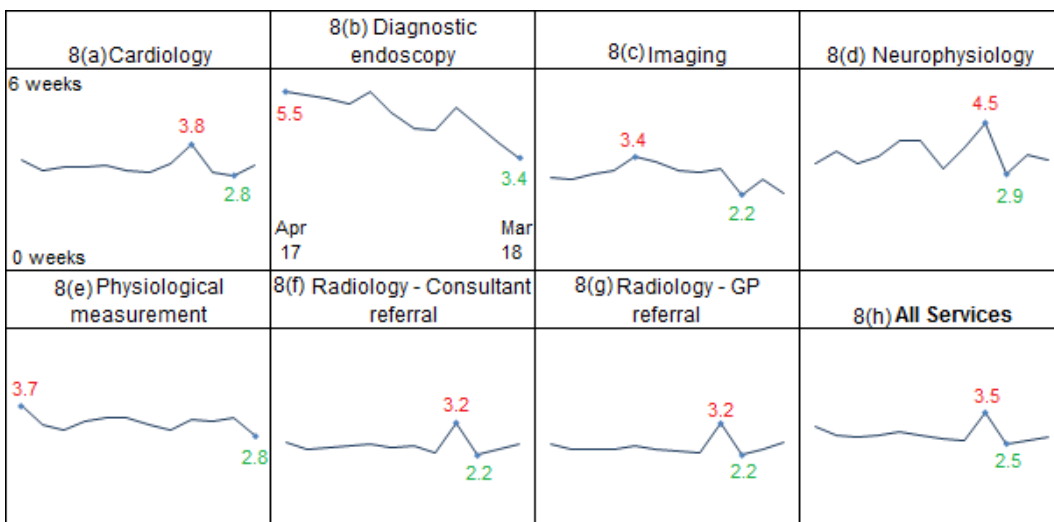
Source: Diagnostic and therapy services waiting times, NHS Wales Informatics Service (NWIS)

Chart 7 shows the median waiting time for diagnostic services by financial year, 2010-11 onwards. The chart shows that:

- The medians tend to be highest in December each year, with smaller peaks also visible in August.
- 2017-18 generally had the shortest median wait, and was closely in line with 2016-17.

Charts 8(a)-(h): Median waiting times by month for specified diagnostic services, 2017-18

Note that the vertical axis on all of the charts runs from 0 to 6 weeks



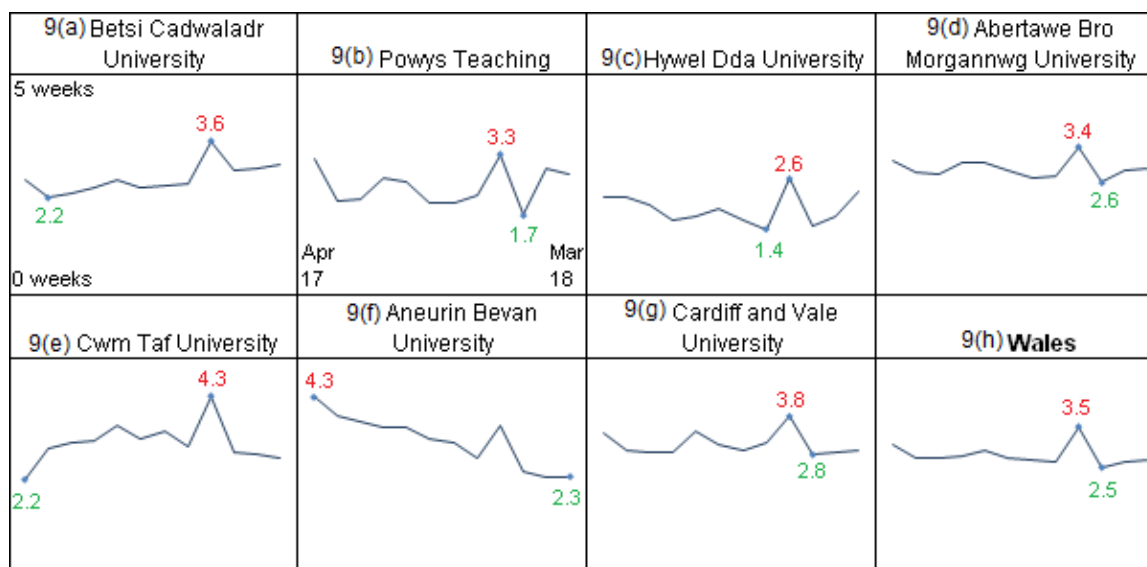
Source: Diagnostic and therapy services waiting times, NHS Wales Informatics Service (NWIS)

Charts 8(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 2017-18:

- The peak in 2017-18 shown in [Chart 4](#) is reflected in all of the services, as is the subsequent decline.
- The median waiting time for all services (Chart 8(h)) closely resembles the median wait for radiology. This is due to radiology typically accounting for around 65 per cent of all patients waiting.
- There was a decline in median waiting times for diagnostic endoscopy services, as previously shown in [Table 2](#).

Charts 9(a)-(h): Median waiting times by month for diagnostic services by LHB provider, 2017-18

Note that the vertical axis on all of the charts runs from 0 to 5 weeks



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

Charts 9(a)-(h) show the median waiting times for specified diagnostic services by LHB provider by month for 2017-18. The data summarised here is available on [StatsWales](#). The median for Powys Teaching may be more volatile than other health boards as the number of patients waiting at this health board is quite low every month. The charts show that in 2017-18:

- 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.
- Aneurin Bevan had the longest median wait in April 2017, but this had dropped to the joint lowest by March 2018, corresponding to the large fall in the number waiting over 8 weeks shown in [Table 3](#).

Therapy services

Performance

Table 4: Patients waiting and median waiting times for therapy services, 2017-18

Month	Patients waiting			Percentage over 14 weeks	Median waiting time
	Total	Less than 14 weeks	14 weeks and over		
Apr-17	54,516	52,167	2,349	4.3	4.9
May-17	54,059	51,004	3,055	5.7	4.5
Jun-17	54,916	51,286	3,630	6.6	4.6
Jul-17	54,985	51,063	3,922	7.1	4.6
Aug-17	55,153	50,394	4,759	8.6	5.1
Sep-17	52,927	48,661	4,266	8.1	5.1
Oct-17	52,501	49,347	3,154	6.0	4.2
Nov-17	50,188	47,924	2,264	4.5	4.1
Dec-17	47,991	46,217	1,774	3.7	4.8
Jan-18	42,573	41,753	820	1.9	3.3
Feb-18	41,982	41,521	461	1.1	3.3
Mar-18	43,117	42,872	245	0.6	3.7

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 2017-18:

- The highest number of patients waiting longer than the standard time occurred in August 2017, as did the longest median (joint longest with September 2017).
- As with the number waiting over 8 weeks for diagnostic services (see [Table 1](#)), the best performance against the standard over the year was in March 2018.

Table 5: Number of patients waiting over 14 weeks by specified therapy service, 2017-18 (a)

	Service							All services
	Arts Therapies	Audiology (Adult hearing aids)	Dietetics	Occupational Therapy	Physiotherapy	Podiatry	Speech Language	
Monthly charts (b)								
Apr-17	0	436	344	315	523	535	196	2,349
May-17	0	468	403	312	1,006	662	204	3,055
Jun-17	0	598	464	340	1,337	699	192	3,630
Jul-17	0	627	529	323	1,732	552	159	3,922
Aug-17	0	763	513	327	2,536	550	70	4,759
Sep-17	0	707	501	321	2,252	399	86	4,266
Oct-17	0	448	360	342	1,479	454	71	3,154
Nov-17	0	390	253	287	943	316	75	2,264
Dec-17	0	315	270	271	638	203	77	1,774
Jan-18	0	161	129	234	249	10	37	820
Feb-18	0	151	40	176	72	7	15	461
Mar-18	0	126	0	109	0	5	5	245

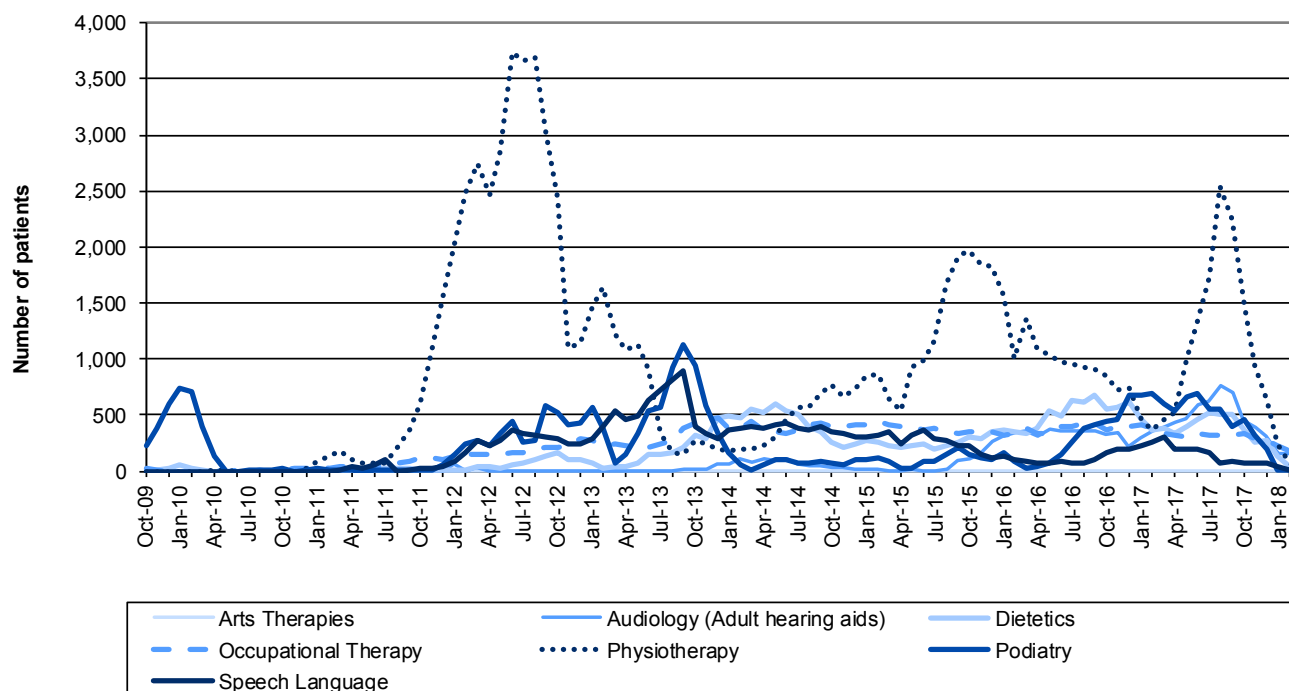
Source: Diagnostic and therapy services waiting times, NHS Wales Informatics Service (NWIS)

(a) 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 2017-18:

- The trend over the year for the number waiting over the standard time for therapy services declined for each service (apart from Arts Therapies which had no waits over 14 weeks during the year).
- There was a large increase in physiotherapy services between April and August followed by a large decline, with the lowest point in March.
- Compared to the start of the year, podiatry and physiotherapy services saw the biggest decline.
- Physiotherapy accounted for the majority of all waits over 14 weeks for most months during the year, but this was no longer the case for the final two months when the majority of patients were waiting for audiology and occupational therapy services.

Chart 10: 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)

(a) Figures include known estimates. See [Estimates](#) for further details

Chart 10 shows the trend of patients waiting over 14 weeks by therapy service.

- The chart shows that increases in the number waiting over 14 weeks since early 2015 were driven largely by those waiting for physiotherapy services.
- Apart from a small peak in podiatry figures in January 2010, all therapy services had low numbers waiting above the target time until August 2011. There were then increases in numbers waiting 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 briefly overtaking physiotherapy as the therapy service with the highest number of patients waiting over 14 weeks in January 2017. Since then, podiatry and speech language both began to decline.
- Over the longer term, the number of physiotherapy waits fluctuates. 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 declined at the start of 2016-17, but increased in August 2017 before declining again at the end of 2017-18, as shown in [Table 5](#).

Table 6: Number of patients waiting over 14 weeks for therapy services by area of provider, 2017-18 (a)

	LHB provider							Wales
	Betsi		Abertawe Bro			Aneurin	Cardiff and	
	Cadwaladr	Powys	Hywel Dda	Morgannwg	Cwm Taf	Bevan	Vale	
	University	Teaching	University	University	University	University	University	
Monthly charts								
Apr-17	0	26	1,736	206	0	259	122	2,349
May-17	0	22	2,267	210	1	433	122	3,055
Jun-17	0	18	2,565	235	2	701	109	3,630
Jul-17	0	16	2,651	224	0	898	133	3,922
Aug-17	3	15	2,910	258	1	1,294	278	4,759
Sep-17	2	8	2,554	117	0	1,335	250	4,266
Oct-17	28	8	1,657	111	1	1,159	190	3,154
Nov-17	5	9	1,023	111	0	907	209	2,264
Dec-17	4	12	776	95	1	640	246	1,774
Jan-18	0	12	312	32	0	238	226	820
Feb-18	0	12	215	3	0	68	163	461
Mar-18	0	3	116	0	0	0	126	245

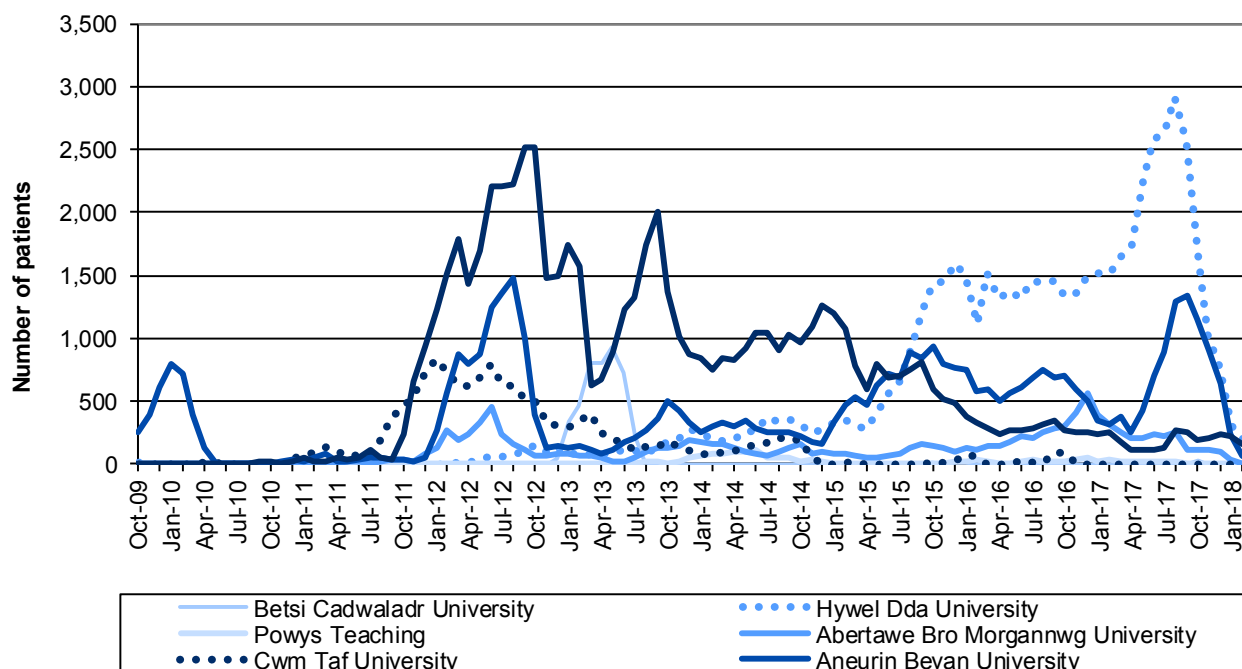
Source: Diagnostic and therapy services waiting times, NHS Wales Informatics Service (NWIS)

(a) 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 2017-18:

- The majority of patients waiting over 14 weeks were generally at Hywel Dda.
- Hywel Dda saw the biggest decline compared to the start of the year.
- Cwm Taf had fewer than 3 patients waiting for every month of the year; Betsi Cadwaladr had fewer than 6 patients for all months except October, whilst Powys had less than 30.
- The number waiting over 14 weeks at Hywel Dda and Aneurin Bevan increased since the start of the year before declining. The numbers at Cardiff and Vale remained fairly stable over the year and the numbers at ABMU declined.
- Numbers waiting longer than the target time were at their lowest in March for most health boards.

Chart 11: 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)

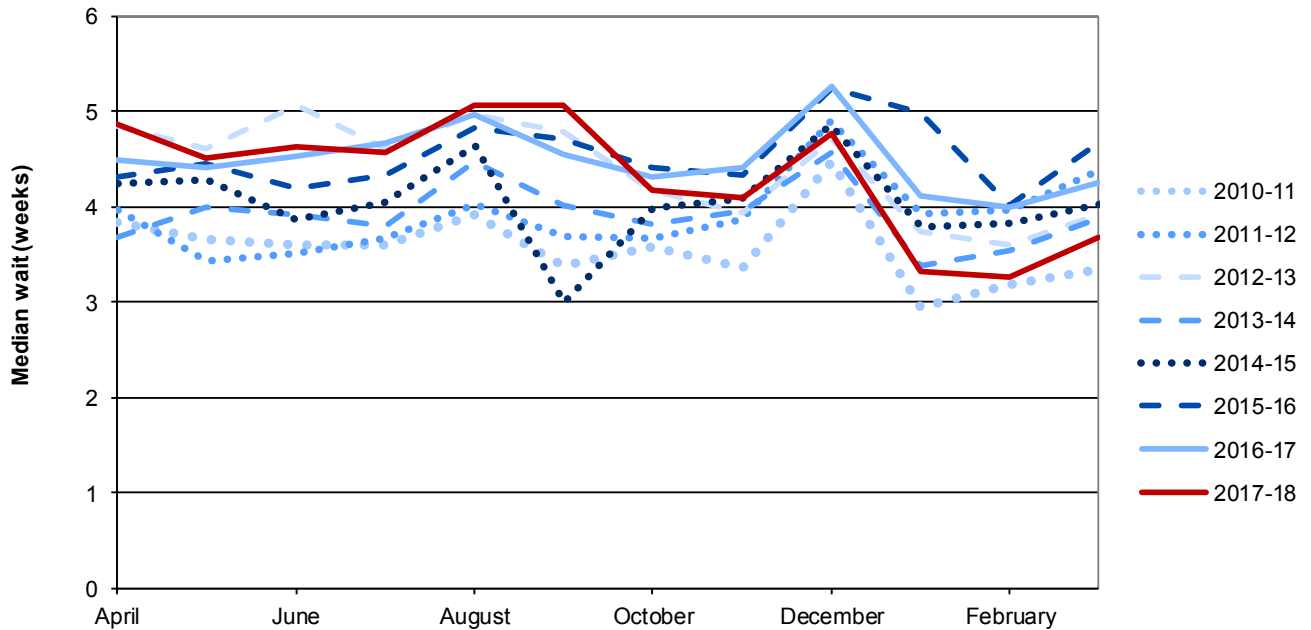
(a) Figures include known estimates. See [Estimates](#) for further details

Chart 11 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 10](#)) 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 reached the highest point as shown in the chart in August 2017, followed by a significant decline (driven by waits for physiotherapy services highlighted in [Chart 10](#)).

Context

Chart 12: Median waiting times for therapy services by financial year, 2010-11 onwards



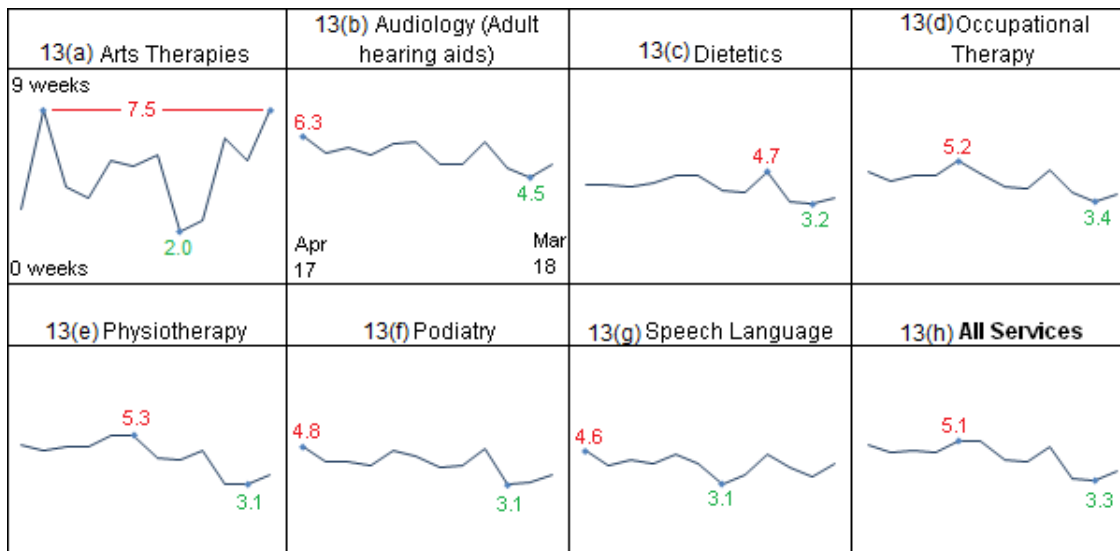
Source: Diagnostic and therapy services waiting times, NHS Wales Informatics Service (NWIS)

Chart 12 shows the median waiting time for the services by financial year, 2010-11 onwards. The chart shows that:

- As with the median waits for diagnostic services (see [Chart 7](#)), the peak month for median waits tends to be December, with smaller peaks also visible in August.
- The trend for 2017-18 is broadly similar to the trend shown in [Chart 2](#), with a high number in August and a low number in March. This is generally the case for the other years.

Charts 13(a)-(h): Median waiting times by month for specified therapy services, 2017-18

Note that the vertical axis on all of the charts runs from 0 to 9 weeks



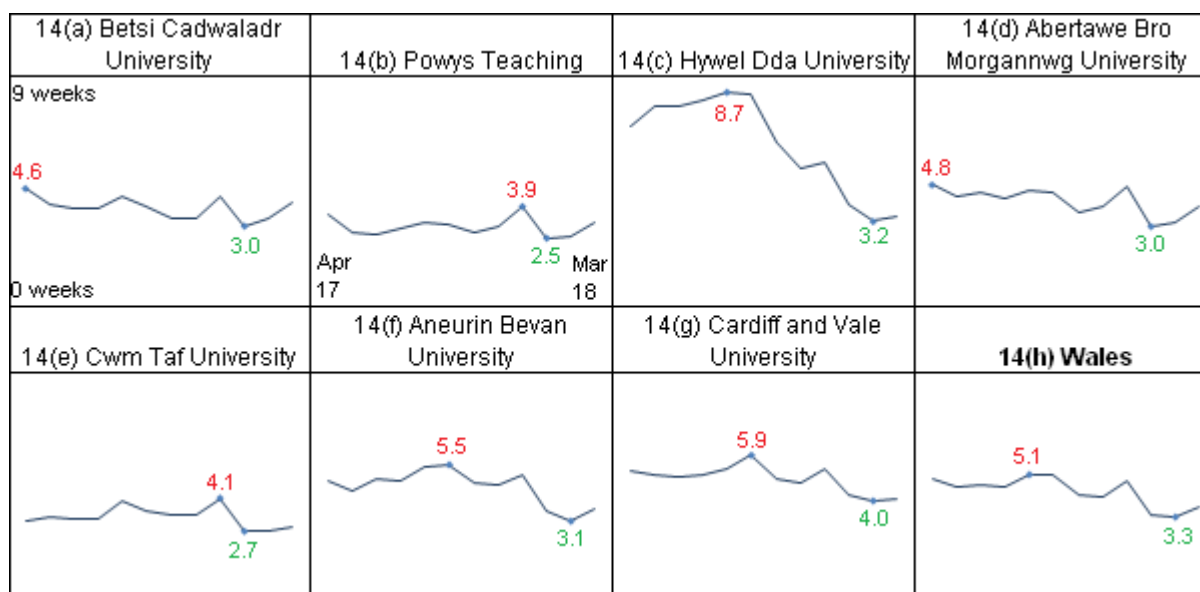
Source: Diagnostic and therapy services waiting times, NHS Wales Informatics Service (NWIS)

Charts 13(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](#). 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. The charts show that in 2017-18:

- The pattern across the year for most services resembles the trend for all services, particularly physiotherapy, podiatry, and occupational therapy.

Charts 14(a)-(h): Median waiting times by month for therapy services by area of provider, 2017-18

Note that the vertical axis on all of the charts runs from 0 to 9 weeks



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

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](#). The charts show that in 2017-18:

- All LHBs saw a decline in median waiting times for therapy services, with the largest decline at Hywel Dda.
- Most LHBs followed a similar pattern to Wales as a whole (chart 14(h)), with spikes in August and December followed by a 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

The statistics cover specific aspects of diagnostic and therapy waiting times and are used as the measure of performance against the NHS Wales standards – see the introduction of the bulletin for information on the standards. Other interests and uses of this data are outlined below.

We encourage users of the statistics to contact us to let us know how they use the data. It would not be possible to provide tables to meet all user needs, but the tables published in the bulletin and StatsWales aim to answer common questions.

We consult with key users prior to making changes and, where possible, publicise changes on the internet, at committees and other networks to consult with users more widely. We aim to respond quickly to policy changes to ensure our statistics remain relevant.

We regularly review all our outputs and welcome feedback.

Users and uses

An understanding of trends in waiting times is crucial for those involved in planning and decision making at the national and local level.

We believe the key users of these statistics are:

- Ministers and their advisors;
- Assembly members and Members Research Service in the National Assembly for Wales;
- Officials within the Department for Health and Social Services at Welsh Government;
- NHS Wales;
- Students, academics and universities;
- Other areas of the Welsh Government;
- Other government departments;
- Media; and
- Individual citizens.

The statistics are used in a variety of ways. Some examples of these include:

- Advice to Ministers and briefings on the latest performance across Wales against the targets;
- To assess, manage and monitor NHS Wales performance against targets;
- By NHS local health boards, to benchmark themselves against other local health boards;

- To contribute to news articles on waiting times in Wales;
- To help determine the service the public may receive from NHS Wales.
- To contribute to news articles on waiting times in Wales;
- To help determine the service the public may receive from NHS Wales.

If you are a user and do not feel the above list adequately covers you please let us know by contacting via stats.healthinfo@gov.wales.

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 Welsh Government has been publishing monthly NHS activity and performance statistics on the same 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 not affected by extreme values in the same way as 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. Estimates were made as follows:

Month	Description
September 2010 – May 2011	Diagnostic Endoscopy, Dietetics, Occupational Therapy, Physiological Measurement, Physiotherapy and Speech Language for Withybush 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 (Administrative systems).
October 2012	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.
February 2013	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.
June 2013	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.
April 2014	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.
April 2017	Data for April 2017 for Cwm Taf University Health Board are estimated using their data for March 2017, as they were unable to provide any data for April 2017.

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 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 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 the indicators, along with narratives for each of the well-being goals and associated technical information is available in the [Well-being of Wales report](#).

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 2019 (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.

Open Government Licence



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