Indicator 8.6 - Proportion of patients on waiting list that have been waiting more than 3 months for treatment

Rationale
This indicator originally related to targets set out in the *NHS Priorities and Planning Framework (PPF) 2003-2006*. This document stated the objective to provide fast, safe and high quality emergency care and fast convenient access and patient choice for planned care. The target associated with this was to achieve a maximum wait of 9 months for all inpatient waiters and reduce the number of 6-month in-patient waiters by 40% by March 2004, as progress towards achieving a maximum 6 month wait for inpatients by December 2005 and a 3 month maximum wait for outpatient appointments by 2008. These targets were set to ensure an overall reduction in the total list size and a reduction of at least 80% by March 2005 in the number of over 6-month in-patient waiters from the March 2003 baseline. Further, the *2004 NHS Improvement Plan* set out that by 2008, no one would have to wait longer than 18 weeks from GP referral to hospital treatment. This target of 18 weeks has been continued in the *Operational Plans 2008/09 - 2010/11*.

Existing indicator sets
This indicator is no longer included in any data sets.

Definition
The number of patients on the waiting list that have been waiting more than 3 months for treatment, expressed as a proportion of the total number of patients on the waiting list, commissioner-based.

Numerator definition
The number of patients on the waiting list that have been waiting more than 3 months for treatment, either to be admitted for treatment as a day case or ordinary inpatient admission. The data does not include:

- patients admitted as emergency cases;
- outpatients;
- patients undergoing a planned programme of treatment e.g. a series of admissions for chemotherapy;
- expectant mothers booked for confinement;
- patients already in hospital;
- patients who are temporarily suspended from waiting lists for social reasons or because they are known to be not medically ready for treatment.
Source of numerator

Data is obtained from the QF01 quarterly return submitted to the Department of Health by Primary Care Trusts, and is available on the Department of Health website.

Calculation of numerator

For 2003/04 Q3 and Q4, the numerator was calculated by subtracting patients classed as waiting ‘Less than 3 months’ from the ‘Total Waiting’ number. For 2004/05 and 2005/06, the numerator was calculated by subtracting patients classed as waiting ‘Less than 1 month’, ‘1-2 months’ and ‘2-3 months’ from the ‘Total Waiting’ number. For 2006/07 Q1 onwards, the numerator was calculated by adding patients classed as waiting ‘13-14’ weeks and upwards.

Denominator definition

The total number of patients on the waiting list, waiting to be admitted for treatment as a day case or ordinary inpatient admission. Exclusions as for numerator above.

Source of denominator

Data is obtained from the QF01 quarterly return submitted to the Department of Health by Primary Care Trusts, and is available on the Department of Health website.

Geographic coverage

This data is available at PCT level. Figures for England are also included in the tables.

Other dimensions of inequality

There are no other dimensions of inequality measured in this dataset.

Timeliness

Data is collected on the QF01 return on a quarterly basis. Figures must be returned to the department two weeks after the end of the quarter, and appear on the Department of Health website approximately two months after the end of the quarter.

Accuracy and completeness

The data includes NHS funded patients waiting for admission either to private or to other non-NHS establishments. The data does not include private patients, or overseas patients.
Patients are only counted once in the return, whether or not the patient is on the waiting list at more than one trust for the same condition.

**Disclosure**

There are no disclosure issues concerning this indicator.

**Further information**

Further information on waiting times can be found at the Department of Health website.

**References**


Health and Social Care Information Centre
Updated May 2013