

# Publication Report



## Accident & Emergency Department Waiting Times

Quarter Ending 31 December 2010

Publication date – 22 February 2011



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## About ISD

Scotland has some of the best health service data in the world combining high quality, consistency, national coverage and the ability to link data to allow patient based analysis and follow up.

Information Services Division (ISD) is a business operating unit of NHS National Services Scotland and has been in existence for over 40 years. We are an essential support service to NHSScotland and the Scottish Government and others, responsive to the needs of NHSScotland as the delivery of health and social care evolves.

**Purpose:** To deliver effective national and specialist intelligence services to improve the health and wellbeing of people in Scotland.

**Mission:** Better Information, Better Decisions, Better Health

**Vision:** To be a valued partner in improving health and wellbeing in Scotland by providing a world class intelligence service.

## Official Statistics

Information Services Division (ISD) is the principal and authoritative source of statistics on health and care services in Scotland. ISD is designated by legislation as a producer of 'Official Statistics'. Our official statistics publications are produced to a high professional standard and comply with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. The Code of Practice is produced and monitored by the UK Statistics Authority which is independent of Government. Under the Code of Practice, the format, content and timing of statistics publications are the responsibility of professional staff working within ISD.

ISD's statistical publications are currently classified as one of the following:

- National Statistics (ie assessed by the UK Statistics Authority as complying with the Code of Practice)
- National Statistics (ie legacy, still to be assessed by the UK Statistics Authority)
- Official Statistics (ie still to be assessed by the UK Statistics Authority)
- other (not Official Statistics)

Further information on ISD's statistics, including compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics, and on the UK Statistics Authority, is available on the [ISD website](#).

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. Designation can be broadly interpreted to mean that the statistics:

- meet identified user needs;
- are well explained and readily accessible;
- are produced according to sound methods, and
- are managed impartially and objectively in the public interest.

Once statistics have been designated as National Statistics it is a statutory requirement that the Code of Practice shall continue to be observed.

## Introduction

In 2004 the Scottish Government (SG) announced a new waiting times target for Accident & Emergency (A&E) departments, stating that by the end of 2007 at least 98 % of patients should be seen and then admitted, transferred or discharged within four hours of their arrival.

The four hour target applied to all areas of emergency care such as assessment units, minor injury units, community hospitals, health centres, anywhere where A&E type activity takes place.

The four hour waiting time target became a standard upon delivery in 2007 and continues to be the measure by which the Scottish Government monitors performance at A&E departments.

This release presents a monthly summary of attendance and waiting times statistics for patients attending A&E departments in Scotland up to, and including December 2010.

## Key points

- The current national waiting time standard states that at least 98% of patients attending an A&E department should be seen within 4 hours of arrival.
- During the quarter ending 31 December 2010, the number of patients attending A&E departments was approximately 131,800 in October, 122,000 in November and 119,300 in December.
- Of these, the proportion seen within 4 hours was; 96.8% in October, 96.1% in November and 94.8% in December.

## Results and Commentary

In the 12 months to December 2010, the number of patients attending A&E departments each month ranged from approximately 116,000 (February 2010) to 149,000 (May 2010).

The proportion of patients seen within 4 hours ranged from 94.8% (December 2010) to 97.9% (July 2010).

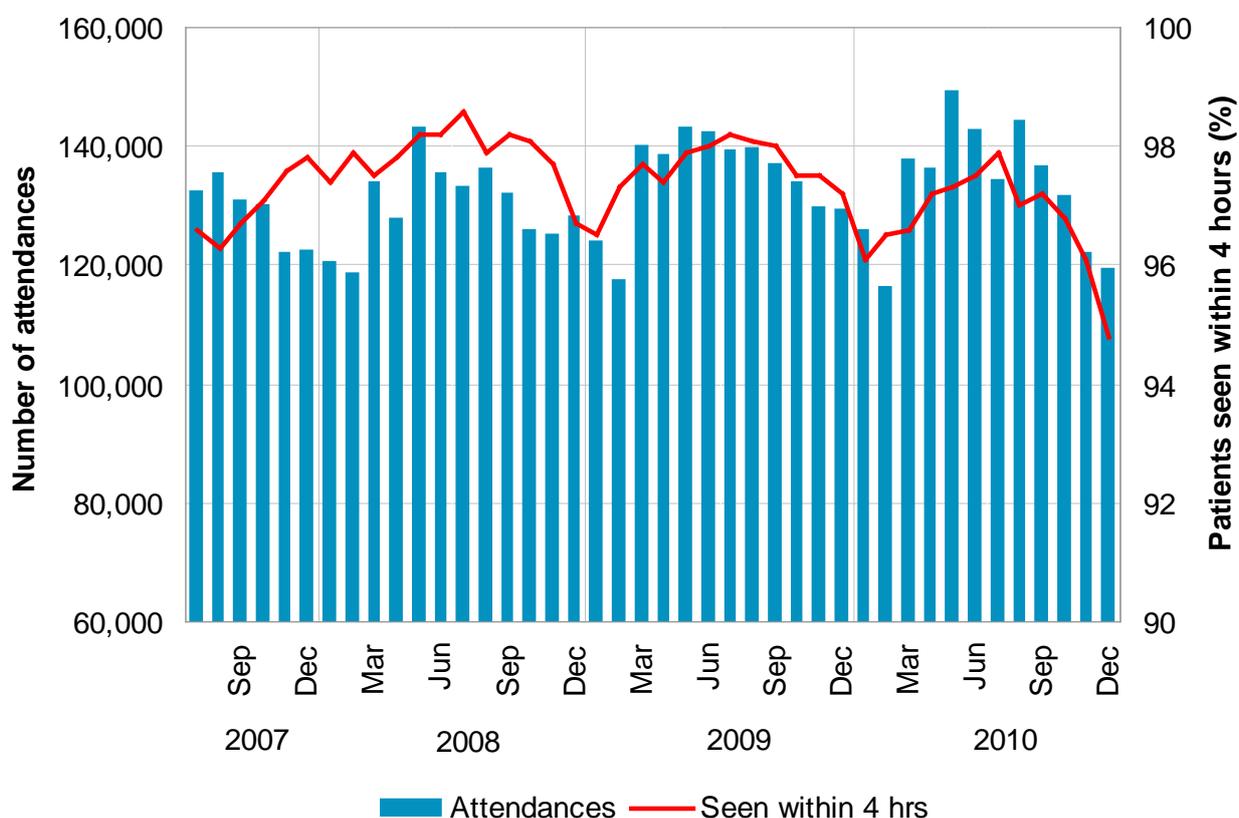
Monthly figures for the latest published quarter are shown in the table below.

**Table – Number of attendances at A&E departments in Scotland and proportion of those seen within 4 hours. Attendances occurring from October 2010 to December 2010.**

| Indicator               | Oct-10  | Nov-10  | Dec-10  |
|-------------------------|---------|---------|---------|
| Attendances             | 131,751 | 122,041 | 119,325 |
| Seen within 4 hours (%) | 96.8    | 96.1    | 94.8    |

The longer term monthly trend for the last three and a half years is illustrated in the chart below.

**Chart – Number of attendances at A&E departments in Scotland and proportion of those seen within 4 hours. Attendances occurring from July 2007 to December 2010.**



Comparable information broken down by NHS Board and at individual site level is available on the ISD website;

[A&E attendances and waiting times: 2010-11 to date](#)  [Excel 132KB]

It should be noted that that information the Borders General Hospital (NHS Borders) are currently moving to a new patient management system. No data has been submitted for the period 26 November to 31 December 2010 and consequently the health board attendance figures for November are an undercount of approximately 20% and December figures have been suppressed to avoid misinterpretation.

Previously published A&E attendance and waiting times data is available on the ISD website: [Emergency Departments Waiting Times Historical Data](#)

## Glossary

|                                       |  |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Accident & Emergency (A&E) department | a hospital department which provides a service primarily for the reception, assessment, examination and treatment of patients who have been involved in an accident, or have sustained an injury or who have an acute surgical or medical emergency which may require hospital facilities. |
| Emergency Department                  | synonym of Accident & Emergency department   |
| Core site                             | a larger hospital containing an Accident and Emergency department  |
| Non-core site                         | a smaller community hospital or minor injuries unit where A&E type activity occurs   |
| Attendance                            | the presence of a patient in an A&E department seeking unplanned medical attention   |
| Four hour performance                 | the proportion of all attendances in a calendar month which are seen within 4 hours of arrival   |
| Patients Seen                         | patients who are assessed by a clinician then either admitted to hospital, discharged or transferred to another hospital   |

## List of Tables

| Table No.      | Name   | Time period      | File & size   |
|----------------|--|------------------|---------------|
| Excel Workbook | <a href="#">A&amp;E attendances and waiting times: 2010-11 to date</a> | See below        | Excel [132KB] |
| Table 1        | Attendances and waiting times summary                                  | Apr 10 to Dec 10 |               |
| Table 2        | Attendances  | Apr 10 to Dec 10 |               |
| Table 3        | Performance against 4 hour standard                                    | Apr 10 to Dec 10 |               |
|                |  |                  |               |
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**In order to view this file, your macro security settings will need to be set to medium. To change macro security settings, in Excel use Tools, Macro, Security - set security level to Medium and re-open the report.**

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## Further Information

Further information on Accident and Emergency Waiting Times can be found on the [Emergency Departments Waiting Times](#) pages of the ISD website.

Further details on ISD publications and available information can be found on the [ISD website](#)

## Appendix

### A1 – Background Information

Data on A&E attendances across Scotland is collected and maintained by ISD in the national data warehouse known as the A&E data mart. Data is collected on local systems, then extracted and submitted to the data mart soon after the end of each month. All sites that provide emergency care are required to submit data to the A&E data mart.

There are two types of data submitted to the A&E data mart; episode and aggregate level data. Larger hospitals with an A&E department generally submit episode level data containing a detailed record for each patient attendance. Smaller sites such as community hospitals or minor injury units generally only submit aggregate level data. These smaller sites only submit total monthly attendance figures as they do not have the technical systems and support to enable collection of detailed patient based information.

A&E attendances are also collected as part of the ISD(S)1 data submission, which provides aggregate numbers of attendances going back to 2001, and can be found on the [Acute Hospital Activity](#) pages of the ISD website

## A2 – Publication Metadata (including revisions details)

| Metadata Indicator                       | Description  |
|--|--|
| Publication title                        | Accident and Emergency Waiting Times   |
| Description                              | Monthly summary of numbers of attendances at accident and emergency departments and proportion of those waiting less than 4 hours  |
| Theme                                    | Health and Social Care   |
| Topic                                    | Access and Waiting Times   |
| Format                                   | Excel workbooks and pdf  |
| Data source(s)                           | A&E2 datamart  |
| Date that data is acquired               | 04 February 2011   |
| Release date                             | The last Tuesday of the month for each publication   |
| Frequency                                | Quarterly  |
| Timeframe of data and timeliness         | From 1 January 2010 to 31 December 2010  |
| Continuity of data                       | (1) NHS Borders - Borders General Hospital are currently moving to a new patient management system. No data has been submitted for 26 November to 31 December 2010.<br>(2) NHS Grampian - Fraserburgh Hospital not submitted November and December 2010 data.  |
| Concepts and definitions                 | <a href="http://www.isdscotland.org/Health-Topics/Waiting-Times/Emergency-Departments/AE2_Users_Guide_v1.0.pdf">http://www.isdscotland.org/Health-Topics/Waiting-Times/Emergency-Departments/AE2_Users_Guide_v1.0.pdf</a>  |
| Relevance and key uses of the statistics | Waiting times are important to patients and are a measure of how the NHS is responding to demands for services. Measuring and regular reporting of waiting times highlights where there are delays in the system and enables monitoring of the effectiveness of NHS performance throughout the country. The NHS in Scotland has been set a number of targets for maximum waiting times.<br><br>Other uses of the data include information requests for a variety of customers, e.g. research charities; public companies; freedom of Information requests; information support to Boards; parliamentary questions.   |
| Accuracy                                 | In addition to any local data quality checks, the data submitted to the A&E data mart is subject to a validation procedure. For a list of the validation rules refer to Appendix A of the A&E User Guide [ <a href="http://www.isdscotland.org/Health-Topics/Waiting-Times/Emergency-Departments/AE2_Users_Guide.pdf">http://www.isdscotland.org/Health-Topics/Waiting-Times/Emergency-Departments/AE2_Users_Guide.pdf</a> ]. As well as ensuring that data for the correct site and time period is submitted, the validation ensures that the data is in the correct format and only contains accepted codes, refer to A&E: Codes and Values [ <a href="http://www.isdscotland.org/Health-Topics/Waiting-Times/Emergency-Departments/AE2_Codes_and_Values.xls">http://www.isdscotland.org/Health-Topics/Waiting-Times/Emergency-Departments/AE2_Codes_and_Values.xls</a> ].<br><br>If the submission file does not meet all of the validation rules then the whole file is rejected. The resulting errors are reported back to the submitting site where they must be amended and the file resubmitted. Once the file passes validation it is loaded into the |

|                                    |   |
|------------------------------------|---|
|                                    | <p>data mart where it is then available for analysis and reporting. ISD works closely with colleagues in the NHS boards to improve the validation and accuracy of the data and to ensure that the appropriate data standards are understood and applied by all sites.</p> <p>Each month a suite of performance and monitoring reports are produced and sent to the SG. These are reviewed and any unusual or unexpected figures are raised with the NHS board for confirmation. Before the 4 hour waiting times data is published each quarter, the figures are sent back to the NHS boards to confirm their accuracy. If changes are required then they must be explained fully by the NHS board and the data is resubmitted. A log is kept noting any changes that are necessary.</p> |
| Completeness                       | <p>Following on from the Audit Scotland Review of Emergency Departments in 2010 [<a href="http://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/docs/health/2010/nr_100812_emergency_departments.pdf">http://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/docs/health/2010/nr_100812_emergency_departments.pdf</a>] a programme of work has begun in order to develop training for NHS Board staff on the completion and understanding of A&amp;E data items, particularly those used for national reporting purposes. In addition to this, ongoing monitoring of the quality of data has begun; this covers the completeness, timeliness and accuracy of data recorded. Biannual meetings with data providers are being established to discuss all aspects of A&amp;E data including data quality.</p>                         |
| Accessibility                      | <p>It is the policy of ISD Scotland to make its web sites and products accessible according to published guidelines. See attached link for further details: <a href="http://www.isdscotland.org/isd/2412.html">http://www.isdscotland.org/isd/2412.html</a></p>   |
| Coherence and clarity              |   |
| Value type and unit of measure     | <p>Count of total attendances. Count of attendances seen within 4 hours. Proportion of attendances seen within 4 hours.</p>   |
| Disclosure                         | <p>The ISD Statistical Disclosure Protocol is followed: <a href="http://www.isdscotland.org/isd/4489.html">http://www.isdscotland.org/isd/4489.html</a>.</p>  |
| Official Statistics designation    | National Statistics   |
| UK Statistics Authority Assessment | <p>Assessed by UK Statistics Authority <a href="http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/assessment/assessment-reports/assessment-report-55---nhs-waiting-times-in-scotland.pdf">http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/assessment/assessment-reports/assessment-report-55---nhs-waiting-times-in-scotland.pdf</a></p>  |
| Last published                     | 30 November 2010  |
| Next published                     | 31 May 2011   |
| Date of first publication          | Data available from 1 July 2007 (with data from main A&E Departments back to 1 March 2006)  |
| Help email                         | <a href="mailto:nss.isdaewaiting@nhs.net">nss.isdaewaiting@nhs.net</a>  |
| Date form completed                | 13 May 2011   |

## **A3 – Early Access details (including Pre-Release Access)**

### **Pre-Release Access**

Under terms of the "Pre-Release Access to Official Statistics (Scotland) Order 2008", ISD are obliged to publish information on those receiving Pre-Release Access ("Pre-Release Access" refers to statistics in their final form prior to publication). The standard maximum Pre-Release Access is five working days. Shown below are details of those receiving standard Pre-Release Access and, separately, those receiving extended Pre-Release Access.

Standard Pre-Release Access:  
Scottish Government Health Department  
NHS Board Chief Executives  
NHS Board Communication leads

### **Extended Pre-Release Access**

Extended Pre-Release Access of 8 working days is given to a small number of named individuals in the Scottish Government Health Department (Analytical Services Division). This Pre-Release Access is for the sole purpose of enabling that department to gain an understanding of the statistics prior to briefing others in Scottish Government (during the period of standard Pre-Release Access).

Scottish Government Health Department (Analytical Services Division)

These statistics will also have been made available to those who needed access to 'management information', ie as part of the delivery of health and care: