

# EMERGENCY CARE WAITING TIME STATISTICS: SEPTEMBER 2010

This statistical release presents information on the time spent waiting in emergency care departments in Northern Ireland for both new and unplanned review attendances. It reports on the performance of HSC Trusts and Hospitals against the DHSSPS Priorities for Action (PfA) target for emergency care departments in Northern Ireland.

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Emergency Care Waiting Time Statistics in  
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3/emergency\\_care-4\\_monthly\\_waiting\\_times.htm](http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/stats_research/stats-activity_stats-2/emergency_care-3/emergency_care-4_monthly_waiting_times.htm)

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## Background

The Priorities for Action (PfA) target for Northern Ireland for 2010/11 requires that:

*'From April 2010, HSC Board and Trusts should ensure 95% of patients attending any A&E department are either treated and discharged home, or admitted within four hours of their arrival in the department. No patient should wait longer than 12 hours.'*

## Key Points

- During the month of September 2010, 83.1% of patients were either treated and discharged or admitted within four hours of their arrival in an emergency care department, compared to 84.7% in August 2010 and 86.1% in July 2010 (Figure 1, Table 1).
- During September 2010, all (100.0%) attendances at Type 3 emergency care departments were treated and discharged, or admitted within 4 hours of their arrival, compared with 90.7% in Type 2 departments and 80.0% in Type 1 departments (Table 4).
- A total of 321 patients waited longer than 12 hours across all emergency care departments in September 2010, compared to 147 in August 2010 and 126 in July 2010 (Table 1).
- There were a total of 58,095 attendances at emergency care departments for the month of September 2010, compared with 60,278 in August 2010 and 58,358 in July 2010 (Figure 1, Table 1).

## Reader Information

Purpose	Monitor and report HSC Trust and Hospital performance against PfA target for waiting times at emergency care departments in Northern Ireland.
Authors	Caolan Laverty, Kieran Taggart, Laura Smyth.
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Statistical Quality	Information detailed in this release has been provided by HSC Trusts and has been validated by Hospital Information Branch (HIB) prior to release.
Target audience	DHSSPS, Chief Executives of HSC Board and Trusts in Northern Ireland, health care professionals, academics, and Health & Social Care stakeholders.
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## Hospital Information Branch (HIB)

Hospital Information Branch is responsible for the collection, quality assurance, analysis and publication of timely and accurate information derived from a wide range of statistical information returns supplied by the HSC Trusts and Hospitals. Statistical information is collected routinely from a variety of electronic patient level administrative systems and pre-defined EXCEL survey return templates. The Head of the Branch is the Principal Statistician, Mrs. Laura Smyth.

The Branch aims to present information in a meaningful way and provide advice on its uses to customers in the Health and Social Care Committee, Professional Advisory Groups, policy branches within the DHSSPS and the general public. The statistical information collected is used to contribute to major exercises such as reporting on corporate monitoring, Health & Personal Social Services (HPSS) performance tables, other comparative performance exercises, target setting, management frameworks and policy development / evaluation. In addition, the information is used in response to a significantly high volume of Parliamentary / Assembly questions and ad-hoc queries each year.

Information is disseminated through a number of key statistical publications, including: Inpatient Activity, Outpatient Activity, Emergency Care, Mental Health & Learning Disability and Waiting Time Statistics (Inpatient, Outpatient, Diagnostics and Cancer). A detailed list of these publications is available from:

Website: [http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/stats\\_research/stats-activity\\_stats-2.htm](http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/stats_research/stats-activity_stats-2.htm)

## Technical Notes

This statistical release is part of a monthly series presenting information on the length of time patients spent waiting to be treated at emergency care departments within Northern Ireland hospitals. It reports on HSC Trust and Hospital performance for the month of September 2010.

### Data Collection

Information presented in this brief is collected monthly using the Emergency Care information return (EC1). The EC1 return records all new and unplanned review attendances at emergency care departments across Northern Ireland. The EC1 information return was set up as an interim measure to monitor waiting times at emergency care departments until such time as a functional patient level dataset becomes available.

### Rounding

Percentages have been rounded to one decimal place and as a consequence some percentages may not sum to 100.

### Data Quality

The data featured in this brief has been provided by HSC Trust and Hospital information staff and has been validated by Hospital Information Branch (HIB) prior to release.

EC1 information returns are submitted to HIB on a monthly basis. At the end of each month, HIB perform a series of validation checks to verify that information is consistent both within and across HSC Trusts / Hospitals. Trend analysis is used to monitor monthly variations.

At the end of the financial year, HIB carry out a more detailed series of validations to verify that information is consistent both within and across returns. Queries arising from validation checks are presented to HSC Trusts for clarification and if required returns may be amended and/or re-submitted. Once complete, all figures are sent to HSC Trusts for final sign-off.

Validated information on emergency care waiting time (EC1) statistics is published within the annual 'Northern Ireland Hospital Statistics: Emergency Care' publication. This is available to view or download from:

[http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/stats\\_research/stats-activity\\_stats-2/emergency\\_care-3/hospital\\_statistics-3\\_emergency\\_care\\_annual.htm](http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/stats_research/stats-activity_stats-2/emergency_care-3/hospital_statistics-3_emergency_care_annual.htm).

## PfA Update – Northern Ireland

To improve access to emergency care departments and standardise performance across Northern Ireland, the PfA target below was introduced for 2010/11:

**'From April 2010, HSC Board and Trusts should ensure 95% of patients attending any A&E department are either treated and discharged home, or admitted within four hours of their arrival in the department. No patient should wait longer than 12 hours.'**

### Latest position (September 2010)

During September 2010, the PfA target for emergency care waiting times was **not achieved**.

Across Northern Ireland, 83.1% of patients attending emergency care departments were either treated and discharged home, or admitted within four hours of their arrival in the department. Out of a total of 58,095 attendances in September 2010, 321 patients waited longer than 12 hours (Table 1).

### Annual Trend

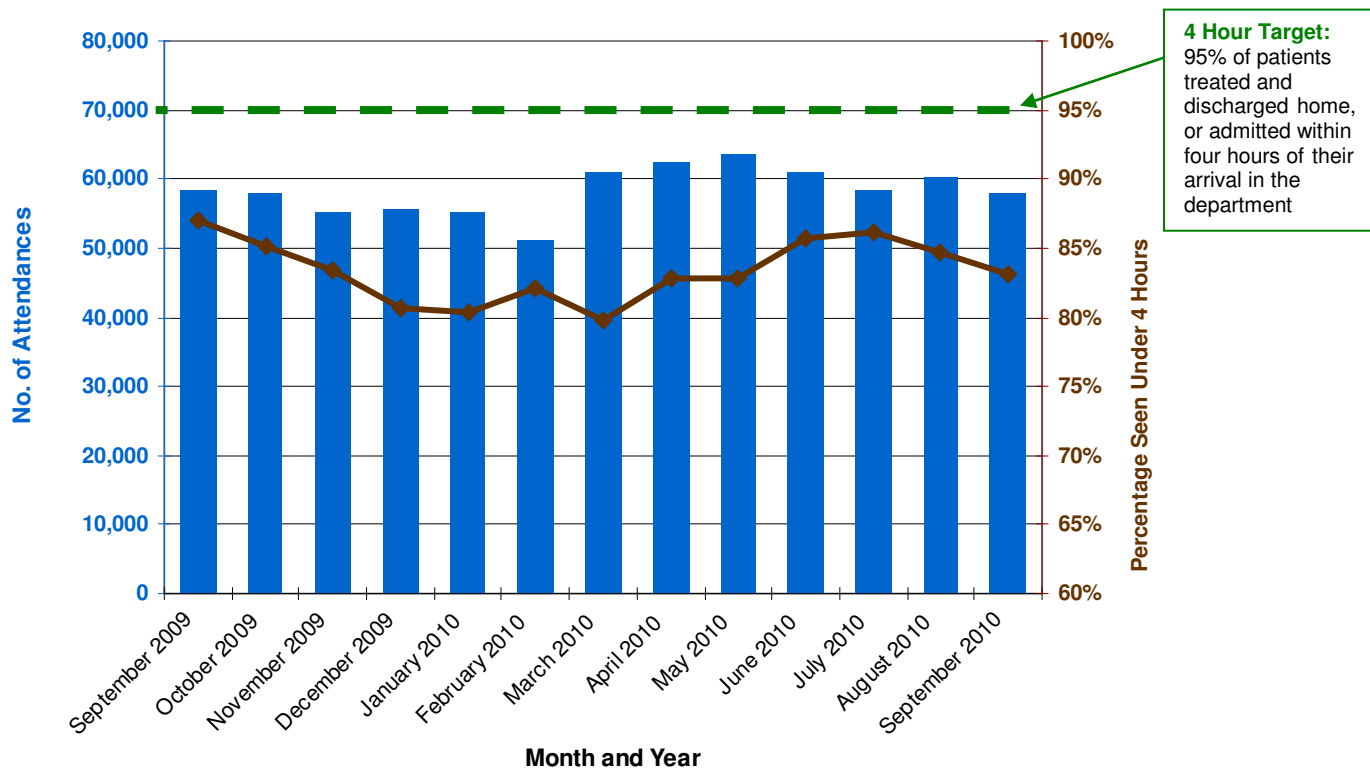
Table 1 and Figure 1 detail Northern Ireland performance against the PfA target for each month since September 2009.

**Table 1: Northern Ireland Performance against the PfA Emergency Care Waiting Times Target (September 2009 - September 2010)<sup>1</sup>**

Month	Percentage Waiting 4 hours and Under	Number Waiting Over 12 hours	Total Attendances
September 2009	87.1%	48	58,414
October 2009	85.1%	46	58,182
November 2009	83.5%	236	55,292
December 2009	80.7%	399	55,882
January 2010	80.4%	823	55,031
February 2010	82.1%	538	51,132
March 2010	79.8%	1,239	61,038
April 2010	82.8%	633	62,378
May 2010	82.8%	661	63,478
June 2010	85.6%	209	61,017
July 2010	86.1%	126	58,358
August 2010	84.7%	147	60,278
September 2010	83.1%	321	58,095

<sup>1</sup> See Note 11 for information on amendments to historical figures.

**Figure 1: Northern Ireland Performance against the PfA Emergency Care Waiting Times Target (September 2009 - September 2010)<sup>2</sup>**



Between March and July 2010, the percentage of patients treated and discharged or admitted within 4 hours of their arrival at emergency care increased by over six percentage points, from 79.8% to 86.1%. However, since July 2010, performance against the 4 hour component of the target decreased by 3 percentage points, from 86.1% in July 2010 to 83.1% in September 2010 (Figure 1 and Table 1).

Between March and July 2010, the number of patients waiting over 12 hours at emergency care decreased, from 1,239 to 126. However, since July 2010 the number waiting over 12 hours has more than doubled, from 126 to 321 in September 2010 (Table 1).

<sup>2</sup> See Note 11 for information on amendments to historical figures.

## PfA Update – HSC Trusts

Table 2 details the performance of each HSC Trust in Northern Ireland against the PfA target for the months of August and September 2010.

**Table 2: HSC Trust Performance against the PfA Emergency Care Waiting Times Target (August 2010 - September 2010)**

HSC Trust	August 2010		September 2010	
	Percentage Waiting 4 Hours and Under	Number Waiting Over 12 Hours	Percentage Waiting 4 Hours and Under	Number Waiting Over 12 Hours
Belfast	79.0%	105	77.9%	170
Northern	82.4%	25	78.7%	66
South Eastern	88.1%	14	86.6%	79
Southern	91.5%	1	90.5%	0
Western	84.4%	2	84.3%	6
<b>Northern Ireland</b>	<b>84.7%</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>83.1%</b>	<b>321</b>

During September 2010, the 4 hour component of the PfA target was not achieved in any of the five HSC Trusts.

Across HSC Trusts, the percentage of patients being treated and discharged or admitted within 4 hours of their arrival in the emergency care department ranged from 90.5% in the Southern HSC Trust to 77.9% in the Belfast HSC Trust (Table 2 and Figure 2).

In September 2010, the 12 hour component of the PfA target was achieved in the Southern HSC Trust only.

Across HSC Trusts, the number of patients waiting longer than 12 hours in emergency care departments ranged from 0 in the Southern HSC Trust to 170 in the Belfast HSC Trust (Table 2 and Figure 3).

Figure 2 details the performance of each HSC Trust in Northern Ireland against the 4 hour component of the PfA target for the months of August 2010 and September 2010.

**Figure 2: HSC Trust Performance against the 4 Hour Component of the PfA Emergency Care Waiting Times Target (August 2010 - September 2010)**

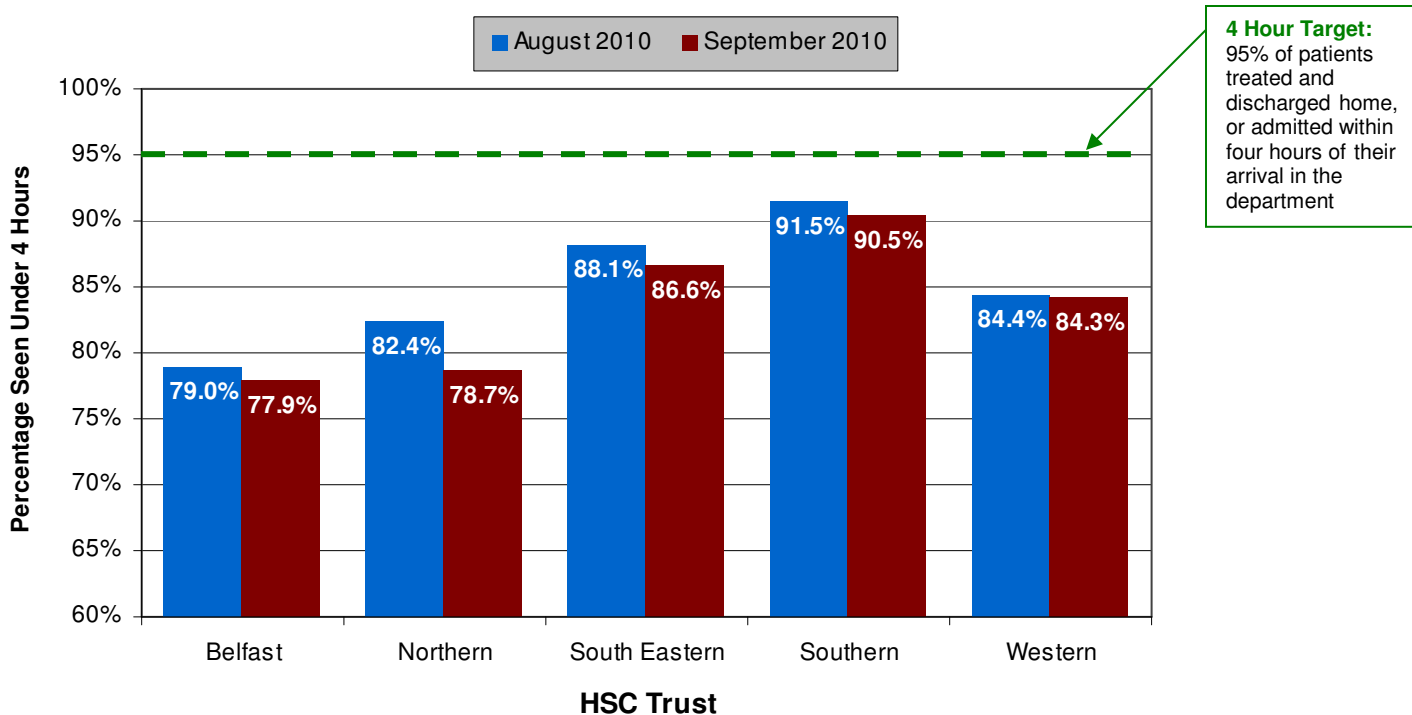
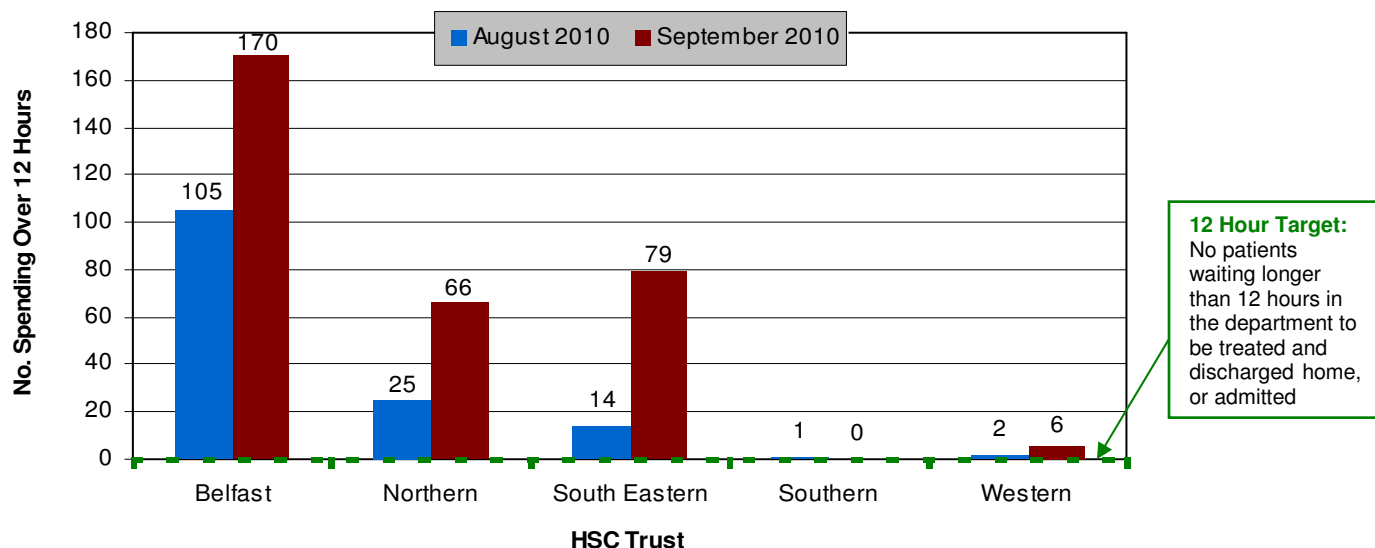


Figure 3 below details the performance of each HSC Trust in Northern Ireland against the 12 hour component of the PfA target for the months of August and September 2010.

**Figure 3: HSC Trust Performance against the 12 Hour Component of the PfA Emergency Care Waiting Times Target (August 2010 - September 2010)**





## PfA Update – Hospital Emergency Care Departments

Table 3 below details the performance of each Emergency Care Department in Northern Ireland against the PfA target during the month of September 2010.

**Table 3: Hospital Performance against the PfA Emergency Care Waiting Times Target (September 2010)**

Emergency Care Department	Percentage Waiting 4 hours and Under	Number Waiting Over 12 hours	Total Attendances
Belfast City Hospital	76.8%	24	3,575
Mater Hospital	70.4%	125	3,424
Royal Victoria Hospital	80.7%	20	6,281
RBHSC	82.6%	1	2,432
<b>Belfast HSC Trust</b>	<b>77.9%</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>15,712</b>
Antrim Hospital	69.1%	56	6,104
Whiteabbey Hospital	99.9%	0	773
Mid Ulster Hospital	100.0%	0	554
Causeway Hospital	87.1%	10	3,612
<b>Northern HSC Trust</b>	<b>78.7%</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>11,043</b>
Ulster Hospital	79.3%	48	6,168
Ards MIU	100.0%	0	778
Bangor MIU	100.0%	0	1,151
Lagan Valley Hospital	91.4%	6	2,681
Downe Hospital	89.5%	25	1,826
<b>South Eastern HSC Trust</b>	<b>86.6%</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>12,604</b>
Craigavon Hospital	84.7%	0	5,898
Daisyhill Hospital	95.3%	0	2,925
South Tyrone Hospital	100.0%	0	1,445
Armagh/Mullinure Hospitals	100.0%	0	688
<b>Southern HSC Trust</b>	<b>90.5%</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>10,956</b>
Altnagelvin Hospital	74.2%	5	4,409
Erne Hospital	96.0%	1	2,125
Tyrone County Hospital	100.0%	0	1,246
<b>Western HSC Trust</b>	<b>84.3%</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7,780</b>
<b>Northern Ireland</b>	<b>83.1%</b>	<b>321</b>	<b>58,095</b>

During September 2010, both components of the PfA target for emergency care waiting times were achieved in Whiteabbey, Mid Ulster, South Tyrone, Tyrone County, Armagh/Mullinure, Ards, Bangor and Daisyhill emergency care departments.

In September 2010, the lowest proportion of patients treated and discharged or admitted in less than 4 hours was reported in the Antrim (69.1%) and Mater (70.4%) hospitals. The highest number of patients waiting over 12 hours was reported in the Mater Hospital (125).

## PfA Update – Emergency Care Department Type<sup>3</sup>

Table 4 details the performance against the PfA target for emergency care waiting times during August and September 2010, by department type.

**Table 4: Performance against the PfA Emergency Care Waiting Times Target by Emergency Care Department Type (August 2010 - September 2010)**

Department Type	August 2010		September 2010	
	Percentage Waiting 4 Hours and Under	Number Waiting Over 12 Hours	Percentage Waiting 4 Hours and Under	Number Waiting Over 12 Hours
Type 1	81.7%	147	80.0%	290
Type 2	94.2%	0	90.7%	31
Type 3	100.0%	0	100.0%	0
<b>All Departments</b>	<b>84.7%</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>83.1%</b>	<b>321</b>

During September 2010, all (100%) attendances at Type 3 emergency care departments were treated and discharged or admitted within 4 hours of their arrival, compared with 90.7% in Type 2 departments and 80.0% in Type 1 departments (Table 4).

### Type 1 Emergency Care Departments

Table 5 details the performance of Type 1 emergency care departments against the PfA target during September 2010.

**Table 5: Type 1 Emergency Care Department Performance against the PfA Emergency Care Waiting Times Target (September 2010)**

Emergency Care Department	Percentage Waiting 4 hours and Under	Number Waiting Over 12 hours	Total Attendances
Altnagelvin	74.2%	5	4,409
Erne Hospital	96.0%	1	2,125
Antrim	69.1%	56	6,104
Causeway	87.1%	10	3,612
Craigavon Hospital	84.7%	0	5,898
Daisyhill Hospital	95.3%	0	2,925
Belfast City Hospital	76.8%	24	3,575
Royal Hospital	80.7%	20	6,281
Mater Hospital	70.4%	125	3,424
RBHSC	82.6%	1	2,432
Ulster Hospital	79.3%	48	6,168
<b>All Type 1 Departments</b>	<b>80.0%</b>	<b>290</b>	<b>46,953</b>

<sup>3</sup> See Note 9 for list of Department Types & Notes 10 & 13 for reclassifications.

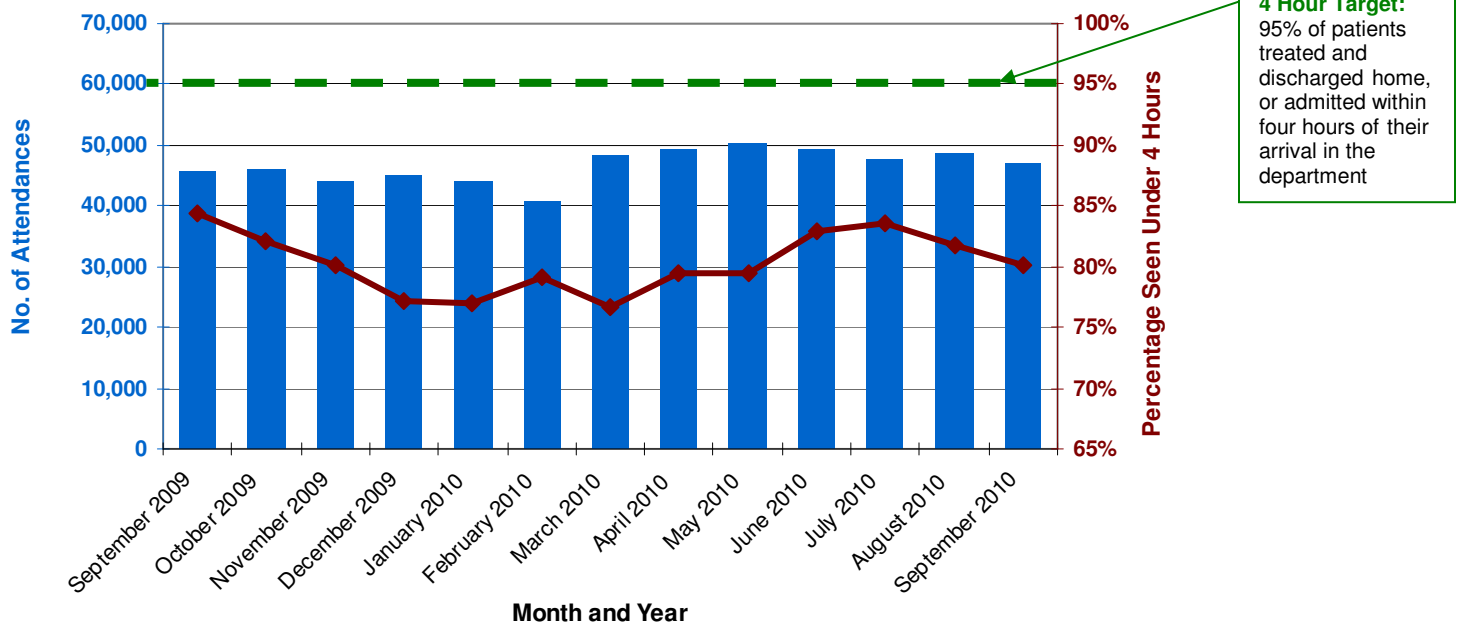
## Annual Trend

Table 6 and Figure 4 present information on the performance of Type 1 emergency care departments against the PfA target for each month since September 2009.

**Table 6: Performance against the PfA Emergency Care Waiting Times Target for Type 1 Emergency Care Departments (September 2009 - September 2010)<sup>4</sup>**

Month	Percentage Waiting 4 hours and Under	Number Waiting Over 12 hours	Total Attendances
September 2009	84.4%	45	45,542
October 2009	82.1%	41	45,862
November 2009	80.2%	229	43,949
December 2009	77.2%	375	45,013
January 2010	77.1%	746	43,975
February 2010	79.1%	486	40,590
March 2010	76.6%	1,146	48,199
April 2010	79.4%	600	49,157
May 2010	79.4%	657	50,317
June 2010	82.9%	205	49,190
July 2010	83.5%	114	47,519
August 2010	81.7%	147	48,784
September 2010	80.0%	290	46,953

**Figure 4: Performance against the PfA Emergency Care Waiting Times Target for Type 1 Emergency Care Departments (September 2009 – September 2010)<sup>4</sup>**



<sup>4</sup> See Note 11 for information on amendments to historical figures.

## Type 2 Emergency Care Departments<sup>5</sup>

Table 7 details the performance of Type 2 emergency care departments against the PfA target during September 2010.

**Table 7: Performance against the PfA Emergency Care Waiting Times Target for Type 2 Emergency Care Departments (September 2010)**

Emergency Care Department	Percentage Waiting 4 hours and Under	Number Waiting Over 12 hours	Total Attendances
Lagan Valley Hospital	91.4%	6	2,681
Downe Hospital	89.5%	25	1,826
<b>All Type 2 Departments</b>	<b>90.7%</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>4,507</b>

## Annual Trend

Table 8 and Figure 5 show the performance of Type 2 emergency care departments against the PfA target for each month since September 2009.

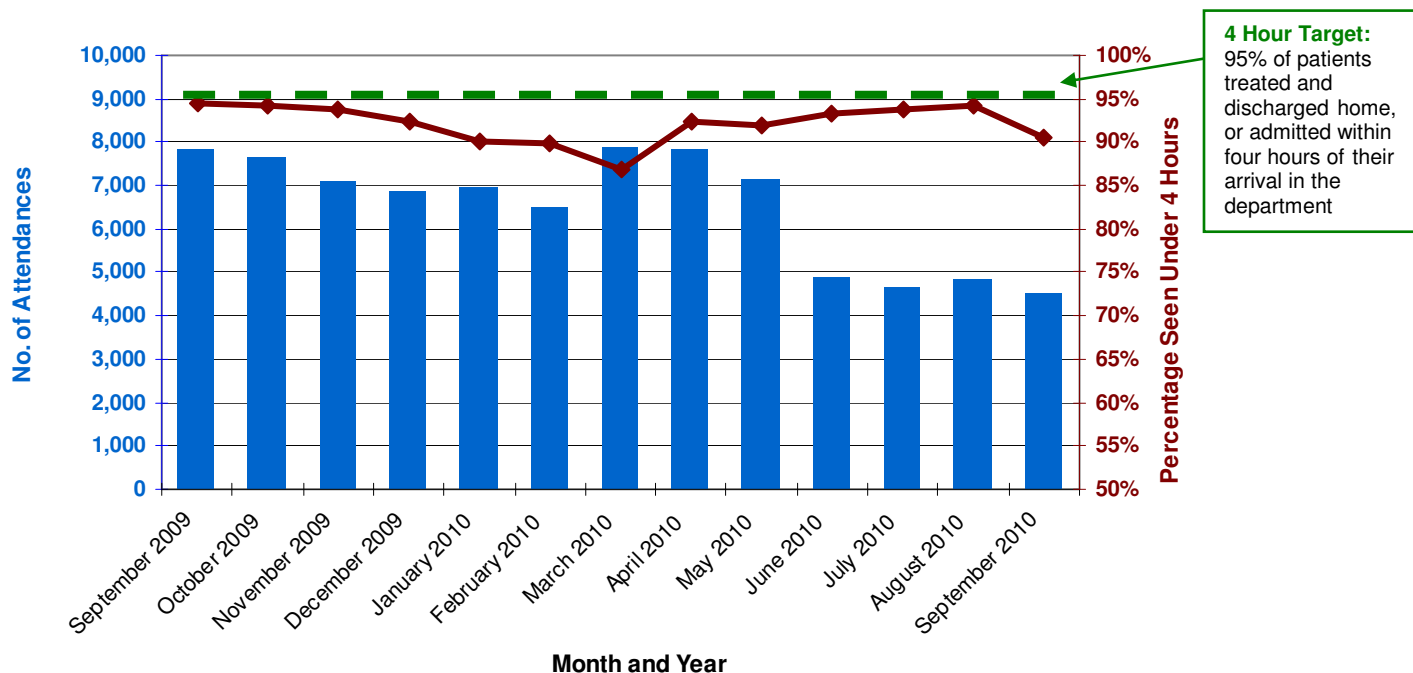
**Table 8: Performance against the PfA Emergency Care Waiting Times Target for Type 2 Emergency Care Departments (September 2009 - September 2010)<sup>6</sup>**

Month	Percentage Waiting 4 hours and Under	Number Waiting Over 12 hours	Total Attendances
September 2009	94.4%	3	7,827
October 2009	94.2%	5	7,667
November 2009	93.8%	7	7,090
December 2009	92.5%	24	6,862
January 2010	90.2%	77	6,975
February 2010	89.8%	52	6,475
March 2010	86.9%	93	7,859
April 2010	92.4%	33	7,843
May 2010	91.9%	4	7,161
June 2010	93.2%	4	4,862
July 2010	93.7%	12	4,663
August 2010	94.2%	0	4,853
September 2010	90.7%	31	4,507

<sup>5</sup> See Note 9 for list of Department Types & Notes 10 & 13 for reclassifications.

<sup>6</sup> See Note 11 for information on amendments to historical figures.

**Figure 5: Performance against the PfA Emergency Care Waiting Times Target for Type 2 Emergency Care Departments (September 2009 - September 2010)<sup>7</sup>**



### Type 3 Emergency Care Departments

Table 9 details the performance of Type 3 emergency care departments against the PfA target during September 2010.

**Table 9: Performance against the PfA Emergency Care Waiting Times Target for Type 3 Emergency Care Departments (September 2010)<sup>8</sup>**

Emergency Care Department	Percentage Waiting 4 hours and Under	Number Waiting Over 12 hours	Total Attendances
Whiteabbey	99.9%	0	773
Mid Ulster	100.0%	0	554
Tyrone County	100.0%	0	1,246
South Tyrone Hospital	100.0%	0	1,445
Armagh/Mullinure	100.0%	0	688
Ards MIU	100.0%	0	778
Bangor MIU	100.0%	0	1,151
<b>All Type 3 Departments</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6,635</b>

<sup>7</sup> See Note 11 for information on amendments to historical figures.

<sup>8</sup> See Note 9 for list of Department Types & Notes 10 & 13 for reclassifications.

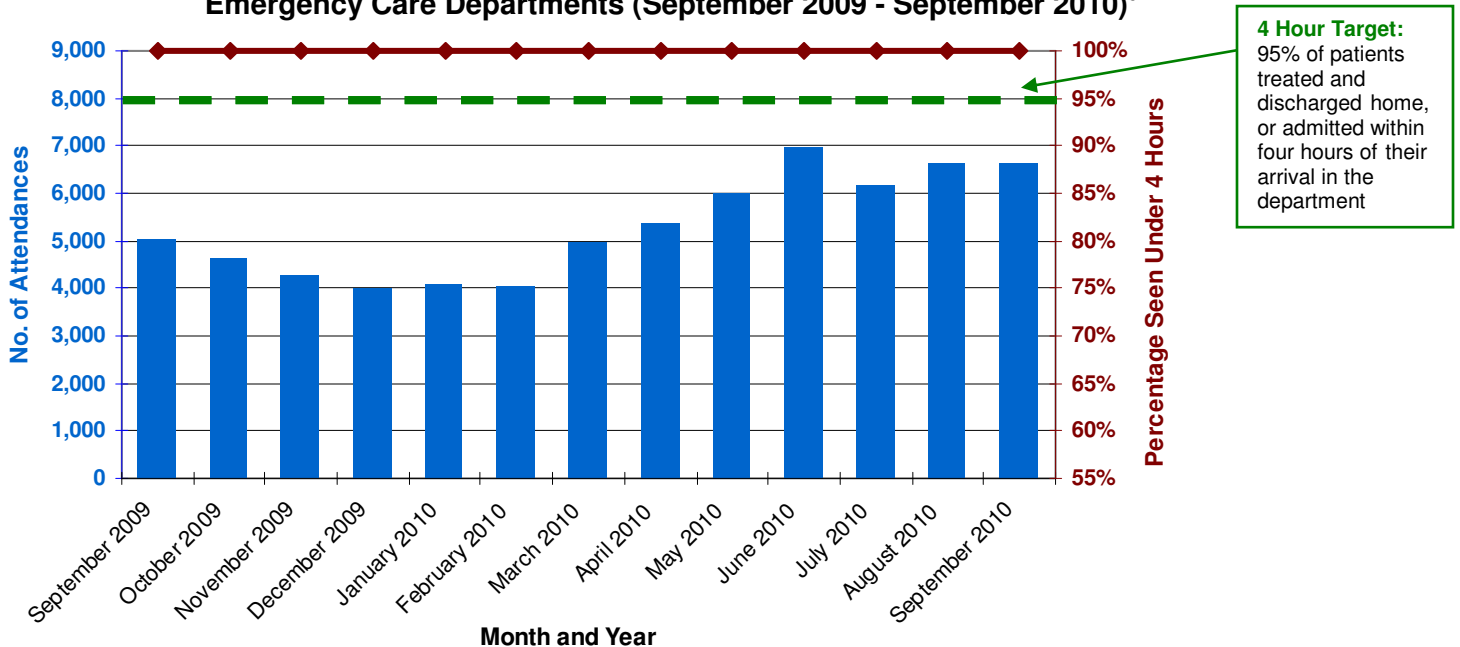
## Annual Trend

Table 10 and Figure 6 present the performance of Type 3 emergency care departments against the PfA target for each month, since September 2009.

**Table 10: Performance against the PfA Emergency Care Waiting Times Target for Type 3 Emergency Care Departments (September 2009 - September 2010)<sup>9</sup>**

Month	Percentage Waiting 4 hours and Under	Number Waiting Over 12 hours	Total Attendances
September 2009	100.0%	0	5,045
October 2009	100.0%	0	4,653
November 2009	100.0%	0	4,253
December 2009	99.9%	0	4,007
January 2010	100.0%	0	4,081
February 2010	100.0%	0	4,067
March 2010	100.0%	0	4,980
April 2010	99.9%	0	5,378
May 2010	100.0%	0	6,000
June 2010	100.0%	0	6,965
July 2010	99.9%	0	6,176
August 2010	100.0%	0	6,641
September 2010	100.0%	0	6,635

**Figure 6: Performance against the PfA Emergency Care Waiting Times Target for Type 3 Emergency Care Departments (September 2009 - September 2010)<sup>9</sup>**



<sup>9</sup> See Note 11 for information on amendments to historical figures.

## Appendices

1. Information on waiting times at emergency care departments in Northern Ireland is collected monthly using the Emergency Care information return (EC1). The EC1 return records all new and unplanned review attendances in each emergency care department in Northern Ireland.
2. The EC1 information return was set up as an interim measure to monitor waiting times at emergency care departments until such time as a functional patient level dataset becomes available.
3. The EC1 information return was introduced in April 2007 to measure a new Priorities for Action (PfA) target, stating that: *'From April 2007, no patient should wait longer than 12 hours in A&E and, by March 2008, 95% of patients who attend A&E should be either treated and discharged home, or admitted within four hours of their arrival in the department.'*

The most recent version of this target relates to the Priorities for Action (PfA) for 2010/11 which states that *'From April 2010, HSC Board and Trusts should ensure 95% of patients attending any A&E department are either treated and discharged home, or admitted within four hours of their arrival in the department. No patient should wait longer than 12 hours.'*

4. The information contained in this publication is not governed by National Statistics.
5. The figures detailed in this statistical release represent the total time spent in an emergency care department from arrival until admission, transfer or discharge. All 'New Attendances' and all 'Unplanned Re-Attendances' at emergency care departments with a departure time, per calendar month are included. They do not include planned review attendances.
6. Time is measured from when a patient arrives at the emergency care department (time of arrival is recorded at registration or triage whichever is earlier (clock starts)) until the patient departs from the emergency care department (time of departure is defined as when the patient's clinical care episode is completed within the emergency care department (clock stops)).
7. The figures in this release relate to all patients, including paediatric patients.

8. In accordance with the Review of Public Administration, with effect from the 1st April 2007, five new integrated Health and Social Care Trusts (Belfast, Northern, South Eastern, Southern and Western) replaced the previous eighteen provider Trusts in Northern Ireland. Where appropriate figures have been presented based on the new Trust Areas.

9. There are three separate categories of emergency care facility included in this publication:

**Type 1 Emergency Care Department** - A consultant-led service with designated accommodation for the reception of emergency care patients, providing both emergency medicine and emergency surgical services on a round the clock basis.

**Type 2 Emergency Care Department** - A consultant-led service with designated accommodation for the reception of emergency care patients, but which does not provide both emergency medicine and emergency surgical services and/or has time-limited opening hours.

**Type 3 Emergency Care Department** - A minor injury unit with designated accommodation for the reception of patients with a minor injury and/or illness. It may be doctor or nurse-led. A defining characteristic of this service is that it treats at least minor injuries and/or illnesses and can be routinely accessed without appointment.

### **Categorisation of Emergency Care Departments**

HSC Trust	Emergency Care Department		
	Type 1	Type 2	Type 3
<b>Belfast</b>	Belfast City Hospital		
	Mater Hospital		
	Royal Hospital		
	RBHSC		
<b>Northern</b>	Antrim		Whiteabbey <sup>10</sup>
	Causeway		Mid Ulster <sup>10</sup>
<b>South Eastern</b>	Ulster Hospital	Lagan Valley Hospital	Ards MIU
		Downe Hospital	Bangor MIU
<b>Southern</b>	Craigavon Hospital		South Tyrone Hospital
	Daisyhill Hospital		Armagh/Mullinure
<b>Western</b>	Altnagelvin		Tyrone County
	Erne Hospital		

<sup>10</sup> See Note 13 for reclassifications



10. From 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2009, Tyrone County Hospital emergency care department was reconfigured from a consultant-led treatment service (Type 2 - emergency care department) to a minor injury unit with designated accommodation for the reception of patients with minor injuries and/or illnesses (Type 3 - emergency care department). This should be taken into consideration when drawing historic comparisons between Type 2 and Type 3 emergency care departments.
  
11. Some historical figures may have been updated to reflect returns re-submitted by HSC Trusts as part of monthly and end of year validations.
  
12. Figures included within this document are accurate as at 27<sup>th</sup> October 2010, any changes to these figures will be reflected in subsequent issues of this publication.
  
13. From 24<sup>th</sup> May 2010, Mid-Ulster and Whiteabbey emergency care departments were reconfigured from consultant-led treatment services (Type 2 - emergency care departments) to minor injury units with designated accommodation for the reception of patients with minor injuries and/or illnesses (Type 3 - emergency care departments). On this basis, figures presented in this bulletin for Type 2 emergency care departments are inclusive of all Type 2 emergency care departments and all activity within Mid-Ulster and Whiteabbey emergency care departments between 1<sup>st</sup> May and 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2010. Similarly, figures presented for Type 3 emergency care departments are inclusive of all Type 3 emergency care departments and all activity within Mid-Ulster and Whiteabbey emergency care departments between May 24<sup>th</sup> and May 31<sup>st</sup> 2010. This should be taken into consideration when drawing historic comparisons between Type 2 and Type 3 emergency care departments.

## Additional Information

**Further information** on Emergency Care Waiting Time Statistics, is available from:

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