

EMERGENCY CARE WAITING TIME STATISTICS: FEBRUARY 2011

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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Contents	Page
Technical Notes	4
Northern Ireland Analysis	5
HSC Trust Analysis	7
Emergency Care Department Analysis	9
Appendices	15

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 February 2011, 76.4% of patients were either treated and discharged or admitted within four hours of their arrival in an emergency care department, compared to 77.5% in January 2011 and 77.8% in December 2010 (Figure 1, Table 1).
- During February 2011, all (100.0%) attendances at Type 3 emergency care departments were treated and discharged, or admitted within 4 hours of their arrival, compared with 78.9% in Type 2 departments and 73.2% in Type 1 departments (Table 4).
- A total of 1,338 patients waited longer than 12 hours across all emergency care departments in February 2011, compared to 1,236 in January 2011 and 702 in December 2010 (Table 1).
- There were a total of 52,921 attendances at emergency care departments for the month of February 2011, compared with 56,476 in January 2011 and 54,604 in December 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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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

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 February 2011.

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.

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 (February 2011)

During February 2011, the PfA target for emergency care waiting times was **not achieved**.

Across Northern Ireland, 76.4% 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 52,921 attendances in February 2011, 1,338 patients waited longer than 12 hours (Table 1).

Annual Trend

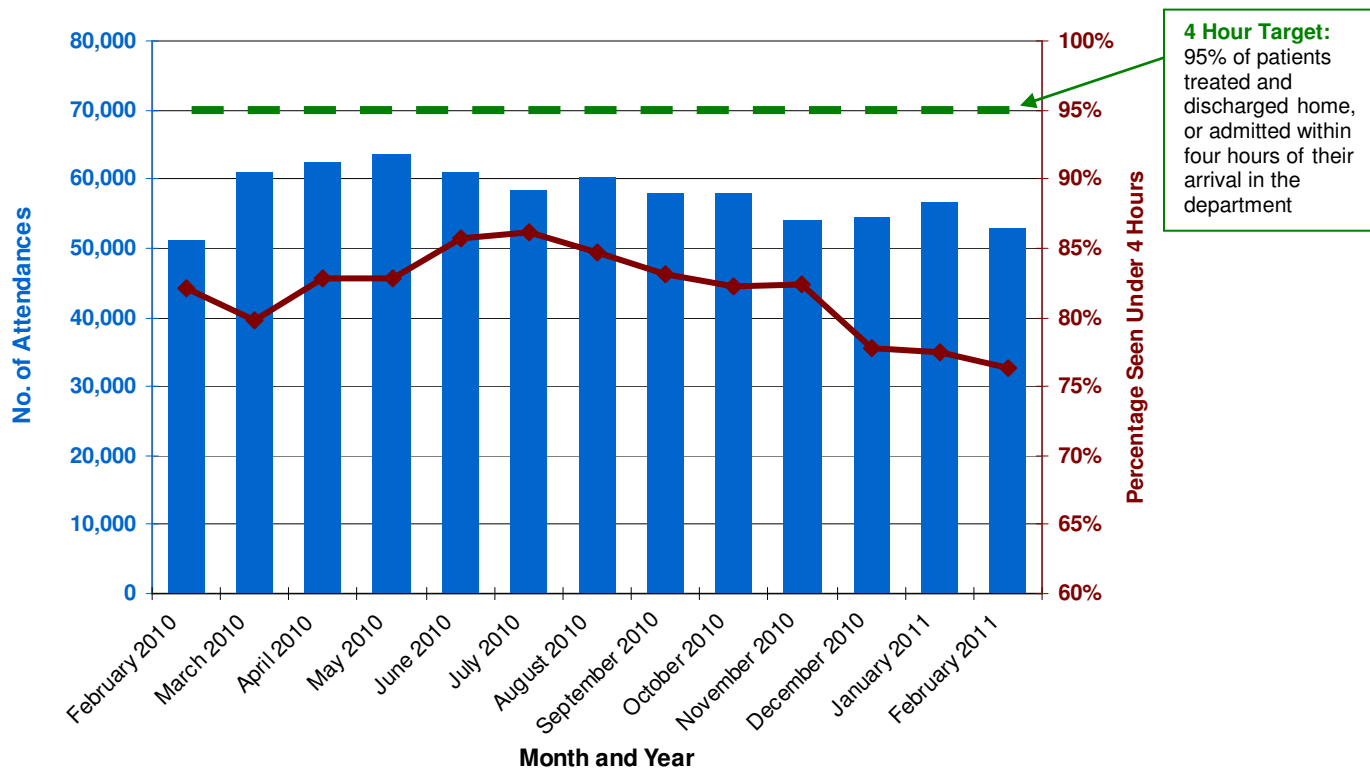
Table 1 and Figure 1 detail Northern Ireland performance against the PfA target for each month since February 2010.

Table 1: Northern Ireland Performance against the PfA Emergency Care Waiting Times Target (February 2010 - February 2011)¹

Month	Percentage Waiting 4 hours and Under	Number Waiting Over 12 hours	Total Attendances
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%	320	58,096
October 2010	82.3%	384	58,000
November 2010	82.3%	774	53,973
December 2010	77.8%	702	54,604
January 2011	77.5%	1,236	56,476
February 2011	76.4%	1,338	52,921

¹ See Note 11 for information on amendments to historical figures.

Figure 1: Northern Ireland Performance against the PfA Emergency Care Waiting Times Target (February 2010 - February 2011)²



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 almost 10 percentage points, from 86.1% in July 2010 to 76.4% in February 2011 (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 increased from 126 to 1,338 in February 2011 (Table 1).

² 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 January and February 2011.

Table 2: HSC Trust Performance against the PfA Emergency Care Waiting Times Target (January 2011 - February 2011)

HSC Trust	January 2011		February 2011	
	Percentage Waiting 4 Hours and Under	Number Waiting Over 12 Hours	Percentage Waiting 4 Hours and Under	Number Waiting Over 12 Hours
Belfast	69.8%	400	67.4%	482
Northern	68.3%	621	66.9%	600
South Eastern	82.4%	208	81.9%	253
Southern	86.3%	5	86.6%	0
Western	86.1%	2	85.1%	3
Northern Ireland	77.5%	1,236	76.4%	1,338

During February 2011, 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 86.6% in the Southern HSC Trust to 66.9% in the Northern HSC Trust (Table 2 and Figure 2).

In February 2011, 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 600 in the Northern 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 January and February 2011.

Figure 2: HSC Trust Performance against the 4 Hour Component of the PfA Emergency Care Waiting Times Target (January 2011 - February 2011)

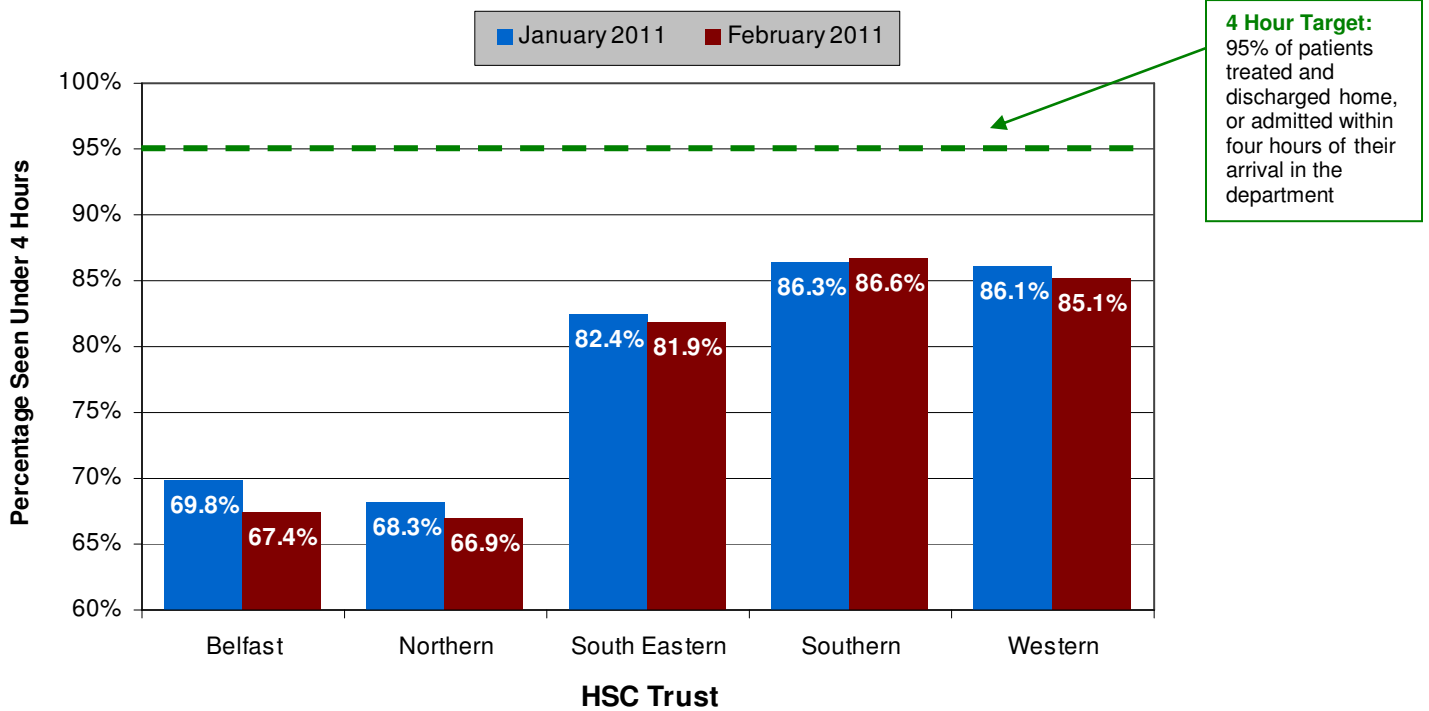
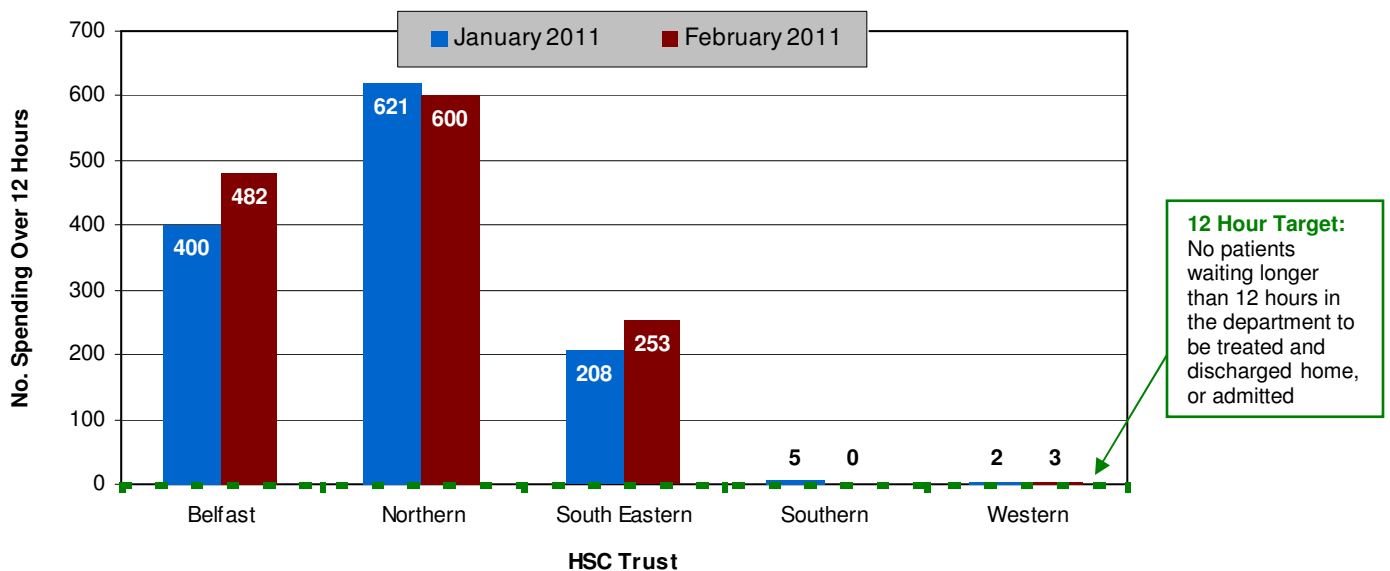


Figure 3 below details the performance of each HSC Trust in Northern Ireland against the 12 hour component of the PfA target for the months of January and February 2011.

Figure 3: HSC Trust Performance against the 12 Hour Component of the PfA Emergency Care Waiting Times Target (January 2011 - February 2011)



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 February 2011.

Table 3: Hospital Performance against the PfA Emergency Care Waiting Times Target (February 2011)

Emergency Care Department	Percentage Waiting 4 hours and Under	Number Waiting Over 12 hours	Total Attendances
Belfast City Hospital	65.7%	115	3,418
Mater Hospital	58.5%	175	3,089
Royal Victoria Hospital	73.4%	186	5,715
RBHSC	67.3%	6	2,850
Belfast HSC Trust	67.4%	482	15,072
Antrim Hospital	54.2%	547	5,273
Whiteabbey Hospital	100.0%	0	629
Mid Ulster Hospital	100.0%	0	493
Causeway Hospital	76.1%	53	3,258
Northern HSC Trust	66.9%	600	9,653
Ulster Hospital	79.0%	111	5,596
Ards MIU	100.0%	0	647
Bangor MIU	100.0%	0	876
Lagan Valley Hospital	74.6%	110	2,431
Downe Hospital	85.8%	32	1,519
South Eastern HSC Trust	81.9%	253	11,069
Craigavon Hospital	77.3%	0	5,485
Daisyhill Hospital	96.2%	0	2,770
South Tyrone Hospital	100.0%	0	1,196
Armagh/Mullinure Hospitals	100.0%	0	619
Southern HSC Trust	86.6%	0	10,070
Altnagelvin Hospital	78.9%	3	4,109
Erne Hospital	90.9%	0	1,988
Tyrone County Hospital	100.0%	0	960
Western HSC Trust	85.1%	3	7,057
Northern Ireland	76.4%	1,338	52,921

During February 2011, 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 February 2011, the lowest proportion of patients treated and discharged or admitted in less than 4 hours was reported in the Antrim Area (54.2%) and Mater (58.5%) hospitals. The highest number of patients waiting over 12 hours was reported in the Antrim Area Hospital (547).

PfA Update – Emergency Care Department Type³

Table 4 details the performance against the PfA target for emergency care waiting times during January and February 2011, by department type.

Table 4: Performance against the PfA Emergency Care Waiting Times Target by Emergency Care Department Type (January 2011 - February 2011)

Department Type	January 2011		February 2011	
	Percentage Waiting 4 Hours and Under	Number Waiting Over 12 Hours	Percentage Waiting 4 Hours and Under	Number Waiting Over 12 Hours
Type 1	74.1%	1,181	73.2%	1,196
Type 2	84.6%	55	78.9%	142
Type 3	100.0%	0	100.0%	0
All Departments	77.5%	1,236	76.4%	1,338

During February 2011, all (100.0%) attendances at Type 3 emergency care departments were treated and discharged or admitted within 4 hours of their arrival, compared with 78.9% in Type 2 departments and 73.2% 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 February 2011.

Table 5: Type 1 Emergency Care Department Performance against the PfA Emergency Care Waiting Times Target (February 2011)

Emergency Care Department	Percentage Waiting 4 hours and Under	Number Waiting Over 12 hours	Total Attendances
Altnagelvin	78.9%	3	4,109
Erne Hospital	90.9%	0	1,988
Antrim	54.2%	547	5,273
Causeway	76.1%	53	3,258
Craigavon Hospital	77.3%	0	5,485
Daisyhill Hospital	96.2%	0	2,770
Belfast City Hospital	65.7%	115	3,418
Royal Hospital	73.4%	186	5,715
Mater Hospital	58.5%	175	3,089
RBHSC	67.3%	6	2,850
Ulster Hospital	79.0%	111	5,596
All Type 1 Departments	73.2%	1,196	43,551

³ See Note 9 for list of Department Types & Notes 10 & 13 for reclassifications.

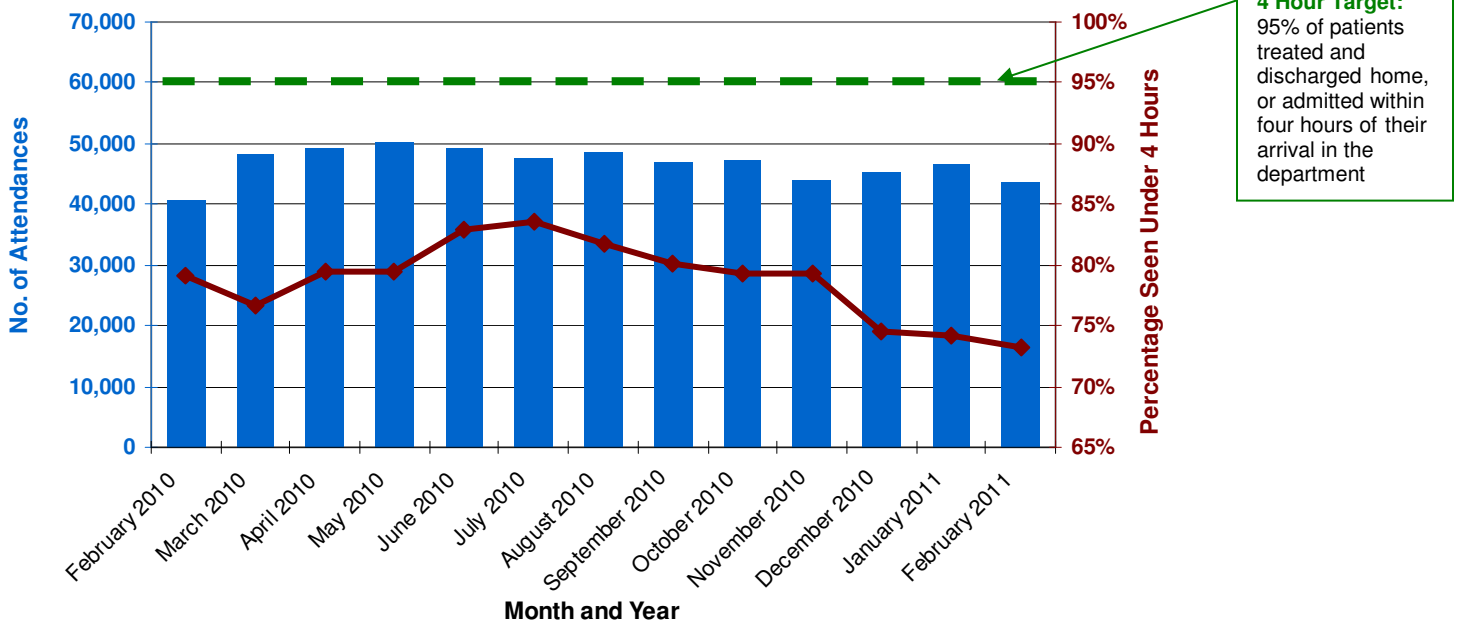
Annual Trend

Table 6 and Figure 4 present information on the performance of Type 1 emergency care departments against the PfA target for each month since February 2010.

Table 6: Performance against the PfA Emergency Care Waiting Times Target for Type 1 Emergency Care Departments (February 2010 - February 2011)⁴

Month	Percentage Waiting 4 hours and Under	Number Waiting Over 12 hours	Total Attendances
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%	289	46,954
October 2010	79.3%	376	47,392
November 2010	79.3%	722	44,052
December 2010	74.5%	664	45,471
January 2011	74.1%	1,181	46,550
February 2011	73.2%	1,196	43,551

Figure 4: Performance against the PfA Emergency Care Waiting Times Target for Type 1 Emergency Care Departments (February 2010 - February 2011)¹



⁴ See Note 11 for information on amendments to historical figures.

Type 2 Emergency Care Departments⁵

Table 7 details the performance of Type 2 emergency care departments against the PfA target during February 2011.

Table 7: Performance against the PfA Emergency Care Waiting Times Target for Type 2 Emergency Care Departments (February 2011)

Emergency Care Department	Percentage Waiting 4 hours and Under	Number Waiting Over 12 hours	Total Attendances
Lagan Valley Hospital	74.6%	110	2,431
Downe Hospital	85.8%	32	1,519
All Type 2 Departments	78.9%	142	3,950

Annual Trend

Table 8 and Figure 5 show the performance of Type 2 emergency care departments against the PfA target for each month since February 2010.

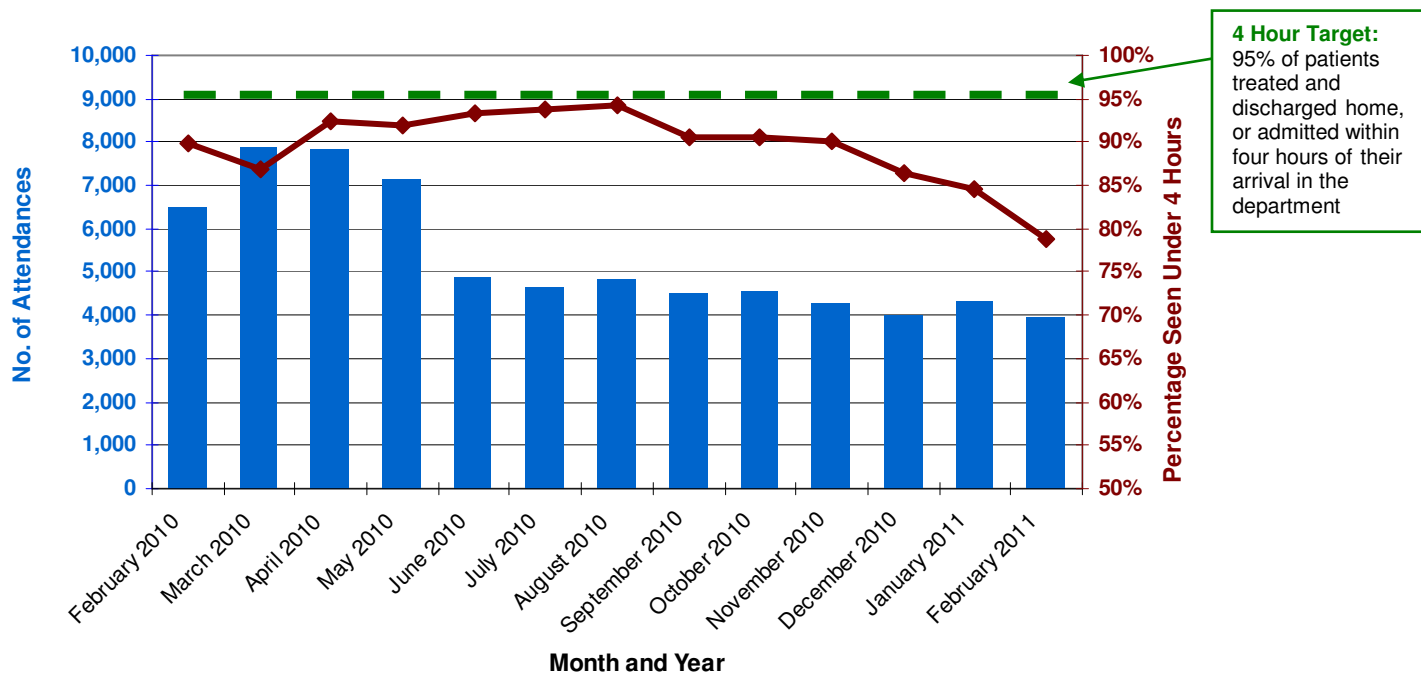
Table 8: Performance against the PfA Emergency Care Waiting Times Target for Type 2 Emergency Care Departments (February 2010 - February 2011)⁶

Month	Percentage Waiting 4 hours and Under	Number Waiting Over 12 hours	Total Attendances
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
October 2010	90.6%	8	4,569
November 2010	90.1%	52	4,283
December 2010	86.5%	38	4,022
January 2011	84.6%	55	4,342
February 2011	78.9%	142	3,950

⁵ See Note 9 for list of Department Types & Notes 10 & 13 for reclassifications.

⁶ 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 (February 2010 - February 2011)⁷



Type 3 Emergency Care Departments⁸

Table 9 details the performance of Type 3 emergency care departments against the PfA target during February 2011.

Table 9: Performance against the PfA Emergency Care Waiting Times Target for Type 3 Emergency Care Departments (February 2011)

Emergency Care Department	Percentage Waiting 4 hours and Under	Number Waiting Over 12 hours	Total Attendances
Whiteabbey	100.0%	0	629
Mid Ulster	100.0%	0	493
Tyrone County	100.0%	0	960
South Tyrone Hospital	100.0%	0	1,196
Armagh/Mullinure	100.0%	0	619
Ards MIU	100.0%	0	647
Bangor MIU	100.0%	0	876
All Type 3 Departments	100.0%	0	5,420

⁷ See Note 11 for information on amendments to historical figures.

⁸ See Note 9 for list of Department Types & Notes 10 & 13 for reclassifications.

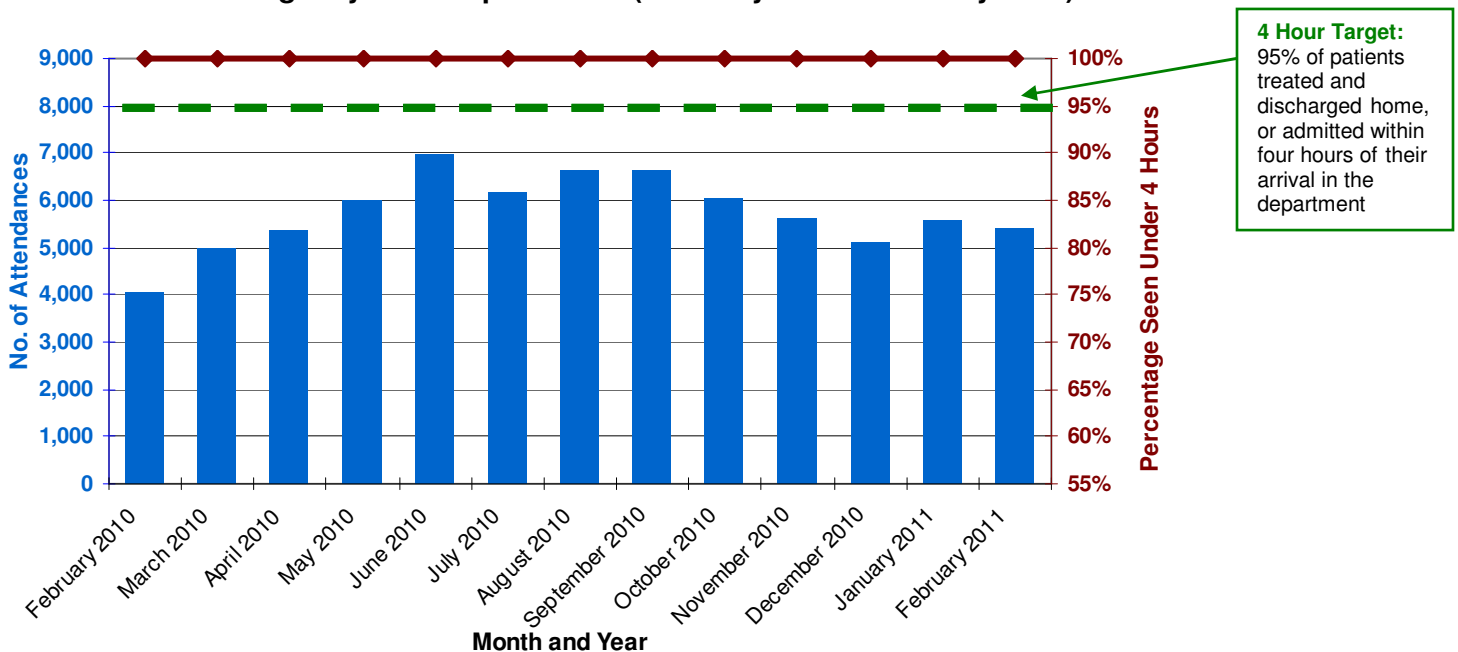
Annual Trend

Table 10 and Figure 6 present the performance of Type 3 emergency care departments against the PfA target for each month, since February 2010.

Table 10: Performance against the PfA Emergency Care Waiting Times Target for Type 3 Emergency Care Departments (February 2010 - February 2011)⁹

Month	Percentage Waiting 4 hours and Under	Number Waiting Over 12 hours	Total Attendances
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
October 2010	100.0%	0	6,039
November 2010	100.0%	0	5,638
December 2010	100.0%	0	5,111
January 2011	100.0%	0	5,584
February 2011	100.0%	0	5,420

Figure 6: Performance against the PfA Emergency Care Waiting Times Target for Type 3 Emergency Care Departments (February 2010 - February 2011)⁹



⁹ 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
Belfast	Belfast City Hospital		
	Mater Hospital		
	Royal Hospital		
	RBHSC		
Northern	Antrim		Whiteabbey ¹⁰
	Causeway		Mid Ulster ¹⁰
South Eastern	Ulster Hospital	Lagan Valley Hospital	Ards MIU
		Downe Hospital	Bangor MIU
Southern	Craigavon Hospital		South Tyrone Hospital
	Daisyhill Hospital		Armagh/Mullinure
Western	Altnagelvin		Tyrone County
	Erne Hospital		

¹⁰ See Note 13 for reclassifications

10. From 2nd 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 end of year validations.

12. Figures included within this document are accurate as at 23rd March 2011, any changes to these figures will be reflected in subsequent issues of this publication.

13. From 24th 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 1st May and 23rd 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 24th and May 31st 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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Internet address: http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/stats_research/stats-activity_stats-2.htm