
Ed Humpherson, Director General for Regulation

Scott Heald
Head of Profession for Statistics and Interim Director (Data Driven Innovation)
Public Health Scotland
(by email)

15 November 2021

Dear Scott,

Chronic pain waiting time statistics in Scotland

As you are aware, we have been looking into concerns raised with us about [chronic pain waiting time statistics](#) in Scotland. The current statistics are for first appointments, there are no data on patients returning for treatment. Thank you for your ongoing engagement with us on this topic.

In September 2017, I [wrote a letter](#) on chronic pain waiting time statistics. The letter set out recommendations for Information Services Division (ISD). In October 2018, ISD [published an update on chronic pain statistics](#) following a user consultation. ISD explored the potential for providing information on return appointments. At the time there were a number of reasons why return waiting times could not be routinely collected on a consistent basis.

Given the absence of routine and consistent data collection across all NHS Regional Boards in Scotland, I understand that you are still not in a position to include return appointment waiting times in the chronic pain waiting time statistics. It is important that you are clear to users on developments to statistics and the reasons it is not possible to include additional information.

The latest information on your website relates to the ISD update in 2018. Users of your statistics must be appropriately informed about any developments or changes on an ongoing basis. Providing this information in a clear and transparency way will support confidence in the decisions you are making and enable more constructive engagement with users of these statistics.

I would be happy to speak with you if you would find it helpful.

Yours sincerely



Ed Humpherson

Director General for Regulation