



Cancer Waiting Times in NHS Scotland

1 July to 30 September 2025

An Accredited official statistics release for Scotland

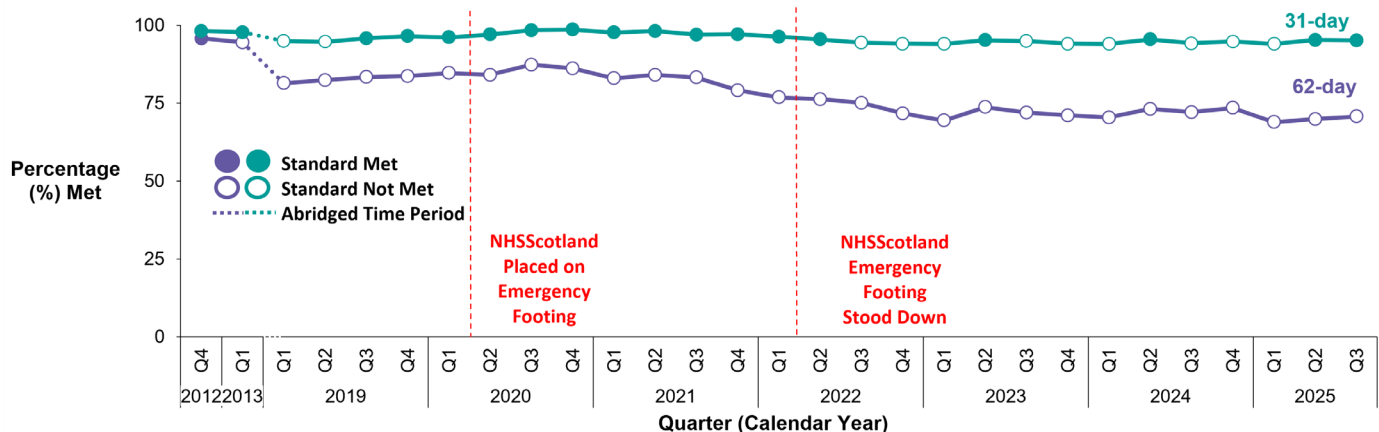
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About this release

This release by Public Health Scotland (PHS) presents the quarterly update of Cancer Waiting Times statistics, reporting **two National Standards** on how long patients waited for their first cancer treatment. This release covers patients who started their first treatment by quarter ending 30 September 2025.

Main Points

NHS Scotland performance against the 62-day and 31-day standards



Note that the x-axis has been abridged, with a jump between Q1 2013 and Q1 2019; the unabridged version can be found in the full report.

The 62-day standard states that 95% of eligible patients should wait no longer than 62 days from urgent suspicion of cancer referral to first cancer treatment. Where the 62-day standard applied:

- There were 4,804 eligible referrals, a decrease of 1.7% from the previous quarter, but an increase of 29.0% from the quarter ending 31 December 2019 (the last full quarter before the COVID-19 pandemic)
- 70.7% of patients started treatment within 62 days, compared with 69.9% in the previous quarter, and 83.7% in the quarter ending 31 December 2019

- The 62-day standard was not met by any NHS Board

The 31-day standard states that 95% of eligible patients should wait no longer than 31 days from decision to treat to first cancer treatment. Where the 31-day standard applied:

- There were 7,392 eligible referrals, a decrease of 0.9% from the previous quarter, but an increase of 15.7% from the quarter ending 31 December 2019
- 95.1% of patients started treatment within 31 days, compared with 95.3% in the previous quarter, and 96.5% in the quarter ending 31 December 2019
- The 31-day standard was met by 11 of the 15 NHS Boards: Golden Jubilee National Hospital, NHS Ayrshire & Arran, NHS Borders, NHS Dumfries & Galloway, NHS Forth Valley, NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde, NHS Lanarkshire, NHS Orkney, NHS Shetland, NHS Tayside, NHS Western Isles

Background

The 62-day standard applies to:

- patients urgently referred with a suspicion of cancer by a primary care clinician/general dental physician,
- patients referred by one of the national cancer screening programmes and,
- direct referrals to hospital where the signs and symptoms are consistent with the cancer diagnosed, as per the Scottish Referral Guidelines e.g. self-referral to A&E

The 31-day standard applies to:

- all patients, regardless of the route of referral

Many Boards have highlighted that staffing issues (details can be found in the [full report](#)) combined with a high number of referrals continue to impact on performance in the latest quarter.

Contact

Greig Stanners, Principal Information Analyst | phs.cancerwaitsnew@phs.scot

For all media enquiries please email phs.comms@phs.scot or call 0131 275 6105.

Further information

Our statistical practice is regulated by the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR). These accredited official statistics were independently reviewed by the Office for Statistics Regulation in March 2017. They comply with the standards of trustworthiness, quality and value in the Code of Practice for Statistics and should be labelled 'accredited official statistics'.

Accredited official statistics are called National Statistics in the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007. Visit the UK Statistics Authority website for more information about the [Code of Practice](#) and [Accredited official statistics](#).

Visit our website for [further information about our statistics and PHS as an Official Statistics producer](#).

PHS and official statistics

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Data from this publication are available from the [publication page](#) on our website.

Open data from this publication is available from the [Scottish Health and Social Care Open Data platform](#).

The next release of this publication will be 31 March 2026.

Other formats of this publication are available on request by calling 0131 314 5300 or emailing phs.otherformats@phs.scot.

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