

Changes to publishing of emergency care facility statistics for August 2012 data onwards – May 2013 update

Q1. What are we doing?

For the August 2012 data onwards, there will be a new approach to publishing the emergency departments waiting times data:

Prior to August 2012 data, the monthly emergency departments waiting times data was published by Welsh Government as official statistics in a Statistical Release, with more detailed data on [StatsWales](#).

For August 2012 data onwards, the monthly data will be published by NHS Wales Informatics Service (NWIS) on their website as management information, around 15th of each month

<http://www.infoandstats.wales.nhs.uk/page.cfm?orgid=869&pid=40971>. From May 2013 onwards, Welsh Government then produce an improved official statistics publication on a quarterly basis. StatsWales will be updated with monthly data when the official statistics are released.

Q2. Why are we doing this?

The reason for this is to:

support the more timely release of data, in this case as management information, into the public domain to ensure that public debate is based on the most recent data;

reduce the frequency of more formal publications of official statistics; and
provide official publications with more added value through context and commentary.

Q3. Where can users find the data in the future?

The August 2012 data onwards will be published by NHS Wales Informatics Service (NWIS) (which collects the data) on their website as management information, <http://www.infoandstats.wales.nhs.uk/page.cfm?orgid=869&pid=40971>, around the 15th of each month in an Excel spreadsheet. This spreadsheet will include links to the previously published official statistics, this Quality Report and a contact for any queries on the data.

The monthly official statistics for A&E waiting times will be published by Welsh Government on a quarterly basis. These will be pre-announced in accordance with the Code of Practice. The statistical first release will be published on the Welsh Government Statistics [web pages](#).

Q4. How do we know the data is of sufficient quality?

Since the data will be published from NWIS systems onto their website a few days after it is collected, there will be less validation and as such it will be published as management information. From reviewing the data for the last few months received by NWIS around the 10-12 calendar day of the month and comparing it to the official statistics published around two weeks later, the indication is that there is very little difference between the two sets of figures.

If Local Health Boards re-submit monthly data, then this will be handled as follows:

if the data is resubmitted for months prior to August 2012, NWIS will inform Welsh Government each month which months' data are affected. Welsh Government will then update the months affected on StatsWales.

if the data is resubmitted for August 2012 onwards, NWIS will update and caveat the management information published on their website, on a monthly basis.

If there are errors/revisions to the monthly management information, NWIS will agree a process for how these changes will be made and include this on their website.

Q5. Are there any limitations?

As the data is being published as management information around two weeks after the end of the reference period, users should be aware of its limitations:

- It will not undergo the same level of validation as was done for the official statistics;

- It is unlikely to contain the same level of detail as the data previously published on StatsWales.

- For the initial publications of the management information, it will only be published in an Excel spreadsheet, however this may change for future publications of the management information and users will be kept informed;

- The monthly publication dates will not be pre-announced, as it is management information rather than official statistics. However, NWIS will seek to publish it around the 15th of each month (earlier than the official monthly statistics that were published by Welsh Government); and

- Outliers may be due to reduced data validation and inferences should be made with care.