

40% of chronic pain patients missing waiting time guarantee

10 Mar 2020



40 percent of chronic pain patients are waiting longer than the SNP's waiting time guarantee of 18 weeks according to the latest statistics, a significant increase since 2015.

Figures released by ISD Scotland revealed that at the end of 2019, only 60.5 percent of patients were seen for their first appointment at a pain clinic within 18 months, only slightly higher than the most recent low of 60.4 percent in September 2016.

The statistics represent a drop of 10 percent from last year alone, and 22.5 percent from the end of 2015 when over 80 percent of patients were seen within the 18 week waiting time target.

In addition, the publication highlights that 1246 patients waited over 18 weeks by the time they were seen, a significant increase from 821 waiting over 18 weeks at the end of 2018, and 580 in 2015.

In addition, of the 4,769 patients who were still waiting for their first appointment at 31 December 2019, 1,053 (22.1 percent) had been waiting for more than 18 weeks, an increase of 7 percent from the previous year alone, and an increase of 14 percent from the end of 2015.

Miles Briggs, Scottish Conservative shadow health secretary said:

"These latest increasing waiting times for those already in significant pain are simply unacceptable.

"As bad as these figures already are, the true picture could be much worse as they don't include patients already in the system.

"Despite the SNP's waiting time guarantee and their failing Waiting Time Improvements Plan, waiting times continue to worsen.

"The Health Secretary simply lurches from catastrophe to catastrophe – with hospitals still not open, health boards in crisis and senior staff launching attacks in the media.

"Over the last thirteen years SNP Ministers haven't taken chronic pain patients' seriously – ignoring their concerns and needs and failing to improve access to pain management clinics and treatments.

"Scottish Conservatives are determined we see a step change in Scotland to help deliver for chronic pain patients and their families."