

Half of patients wait more than a month for AHP appointments

- [Home](#)
- [All News](#)
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Around half of patients needing appointments from allied health professionals for care such as physiotherapy have to wait longer than a month, a new report has found.

ISD Scotland said just 54.8 per cent were seen to within the target four weeks for musculoskeletal issues over the last quarter.

That means roughly 36,000 people waited too long for a visit from a physio, occupational therapist or someone to help with chiropody and podiatry problems.

Official Scottish Government targets dictate that health boards should see at least 90 per cent of patients requiring an AHP within four weeks.

In addition to AHPs, new statistics today revealed waiting times at Scotland's accident and emergency departments have dropped to their worst since April.

At a national level, 92 per cent of casualty patients were treated within the target four hours.

And at the SNP government's flagship hospital, the Queen Elizabeth in Glasgow, waiting times compliance was the worst in the country at 79.1 per cent.

Scottish Conservative shadow health secretary Miles Briggs said:

"These are patients who are often in a great deal of pain, and shouldn't be expected to wait longer than a month for an appointment.

"But yet again, we see an area of the NHS in Scotland which has been utterly neglected by this SNP government.

"The target is there in black and white that 90 per cent of musculoskeletal patients must be seen to be an AHP within a month.

"As it stands, about half are meeting that target, and that is another NHS disgrace occurring on this SNP government's watch."

On A&E waiting times, he added:

“The SNP is running out of excuses for its performance on A&E waiting times.

“We’re not in the grip of a winter crisis and, as we learned earlier this week, there’s no shortage of funding coming to Scotland for health through the Barnett Formula.

“Yet still the SNP has managed to preside over a recruitment crisis which is leaving casualty departments short-staffed and over-stretched.

“The opening of the Queen Elizabeth hospital in Glasgow should have been an opportunity to address this, at least in one area of the country.

“But it’s the worst-performing in Scotland, and has been consistently since it opened.”