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Figures released today on chronic pain have revealed a Scottish health board made almost all of its patients wait too long for treatment.

ISD Scotland stated just six per cent of people living with months of chronic pain in NHS Ayrshire and Arran were seen to within the target 18 weeks in the last three months of 2017.

It means 221 people waited beyond that timeframe for a first appointment at a pain clinic or service, with only 14 being dealt with on time.

Other health boards also struggled with the target, with NHS Grampian seeing just a quarter of chronic pain patients on time, and Dumfries and Galloway only 59 per cent.

Across Scotland, there was a 72.3 per cent compliance rate with the 18-week target.

The statistics come despite the issue of pain receiving more prominence, with campaigners and opposition politicians repeatedly calling for better care of those with chronic pain, which is defined by experts as continuous, long-lasting pain which has persisted for more than three months.

Shadow health secretary Miles Briggs currently co-convenes the Scottish Parliament's cross party group on chronic pain.

Scottish Conservative shadow health secretary Miles Briggs said:

“Life can be utterly miserable for someone living with chronic pain.

“To make them wait more than 18 weeks for an appointment is verging on scandalous, and it's hard to see what the excuse for this could be.

“The national average of 72.3 per cent is bad enough, but for one health board to be seeing just six per cent of people in this time is shocking.

“Chronic pain is a matter of extreme importance and should be regarded as such by the SNP government.

“The nationalists have been in charge of health for more than 10 years, and

the failings in this area are all on them.”