

Data was contributed by 18 sites, with the number of cases contributed ranging between 16 and 10 381. The mean number of cases contributed was 1 625 and the median number was 794. Only 6 services contributed more than 1 000 cases and 6 services contributed less than 500. The total number of cases received was 30 519. Clients with missing age or gender data, or with age less than 16 or greater than 65, were removed from the dataset yielding a dataset of 28 378 cases. Finally, clients whose only indicated therapy modality was something other than individual therapy were removed yielding a final dataset of 28 237 clients.

Clients with no referral date, with a negative waiting time (implying dates had been incorrectly entered) or with more than 2 years (730 days) between referral and assessment were removed from this stage of the analysis. This yielded a sample size of

25 204 clients with data for at least one of 'days between referral and first assessment', 'days between referral and therapy start' or 'days between last assessment and therapy start'.

At an overall level, the average wait between referral and first therapy session in HE services is 16 days (SD = 55.3), between last assessment and first therapy is 6 days (SD = 38.0) and between referral and first assessment is 8 days (SD = 20.1).

Service-level benchmark data on waiting times is shown in Table 1 and Figure 1. Because the differences between waiting times for HE and PC are so marked, the most recently available Primary Care benchmark data (CORE IMS, 2010) is also included for comparison.

Table 1: Waiting time (days) benchmark statistics

	Referral to first assessment		Last assessment to first therapy session		Referral to first therapy session	
	HE	PC	HE	PC	HE	PC
N	14 842	59 263	24 881	38 892	13 905	42 575
Mean (SD)	9 (5.9)	63 (33.8)	9 (8.4)	22 (27.8)	16 (12.2)	84 (42.3)
Minimum	0	11	0	0	2	15
25th percentile	6	44	6	5	8	56
50th percentile (median)	8	57	8	12	13	72
75th percentile	11	79	11	30	24	108
Maximum	22	153	22	126	54	228

Waiting times are, in general, much lower for HE services than for PC services. For example, the service-level average wait between referral and first assessment is 9 days in HE, compared with 63 days in PC. The difference is most pronounced however when we look at the length of time between referral and first therapy session: HE clients wait an average of 16 days between referral and first therapy (though there is a large amount of missing data for this indicator) while PC clients wait an average of 84 days.

Service-level benchmarks for the waiting time between referral and first assessment for clients in the HE sector are shown in Figure 1 and for referral to first therapy in Figure 2. The service-level average waiting time for this referral to first assessment is 9 days and for referral to first therapy is 16 days.

The median waiting time between referral and first assessment is 8 days, indicating that at a service level 50% of clients referred to HE therapy services and accepted for therapy are assessed in just over a week. Furthermore, 75% of clients were seen in less than 2 weeks.

Figure 1: Benchmark for referral to first assessment

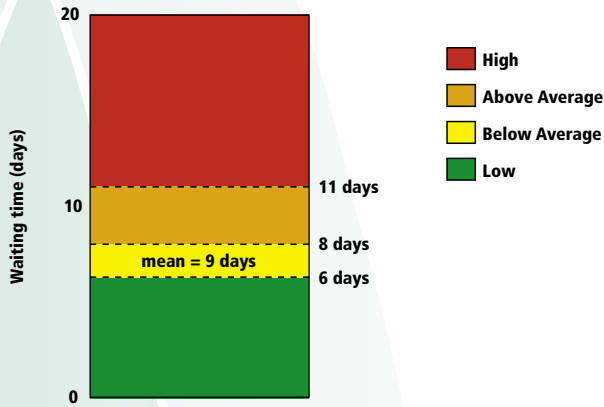
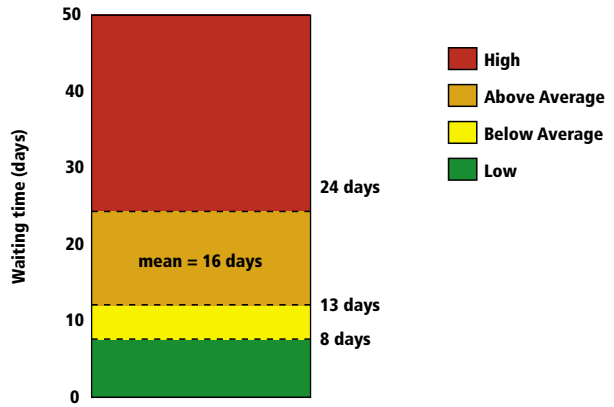


Figure 2: Benchmark for referral to first therapy appointments



Although waiting times appear to be much lower in HE services than in PC services, it is important to note that there is a large amount of missing data - or data completion errors - around referral, assessment and therapy start dates. So, despite the fact that the master data set contains data for over 28 000 clients, data on the wait between referral and first assessment was available for slightly over half of the sample. However, data on the wait between referral to first therapy session was available for the majority of the sample.

