NHS Benchmarking Network

Benchmarking Acute Therapies

❝ NHS benchmarking data was a foundation stone for the business case to enable the Service to secure investment to enable the service to drive discharge in the hospital setting."

Member Feedback, 2017

Therapy services are crucial to the quality of care for patients across a range of specialities in acute hospitals. Timely assessment by a therapist is key to maintaining patient flows and reducing length of stay. Although the sums of money invested in therapies are material, there is limited benchmarking available in this area because therapy input is not typically unbundled from PbR and elements of the service may be included in the non-PbR, block elements of the acute contracts.

The Acute Therapies project covers four clinical specialisms; Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy, Speech & Language Therapy and Dietetics. Data is collected for inpatient and outpatient activity, which provides a holistic approach to therapy services.

Themes explored include therapy productivity, optimising patient flow and minimising length of stay. The project aims to deliver a range of analysis including comparisons of service models, workforce, activity, productivity metrics, investment levels and impact on wider trust performance.

Key outcomes from the 2017 project:

- Staffing levels in both Physiotherapy inpatient and outpatient teams have held up well in 2017/18.
- The Occupational Therapy skill mix within inpatient and outpatient teams remains consistent with earlier iterations of the project, in which outpatient teams having a richer skill mix than inpatient teams.
- Outpatient services in Speech & Language Therapy have seen a reduction in the number of follow-up to new attendances (3.4 in 2015/16 to 2.5 in 2017/18), and DNA rates have increased 2 percentage points in the last 2 years.
- Dietetic outpatient services have reduced waiting times by 3 days, and DNA rates have shown improvement, reducing from 14.5% in 2015/16 to 12.0% in 2017/18.

❝ We have used the benchmarking toolkits for justification in our SLT meetings. In the last audit we were in the lower percentile for numbers of staff and skill-mix, had less staff per bed but were high on activity. It showed us to be lean and efficient compared to some other trusts which has helped in service review."

Member Feedback, 2017

The NHS Benchmarking Network is the in-house benchmarking service of the NHS. Through an active membership spanning the four UK home countries, and covering 70% of NHS organisations, we deliver unique intelligence on NHS service provision. The Network projects are a key source of timely, accurate and informative comparative data for strategic planning and service improvement programmes.

Benchmarking Acute Therapies

Acute Therapies 2017 - Inpatient Services

Average length of an inpatient direct contact (minutes)

Physiotherapy	Occupational therapy	Speech & language therapy	Dietetics
32	37	43	33

Productivity - total inpatient contacts per clinical WTE in post

Physiotherapy	Occupational therapy	Speech & language therapy	Dietetics
1,470	1,231	1,273	1,422

Acute Therapies 2017 - Outpatient Services

Average waiting time for an outpatient appointment (days)

Physiotherapy	Occupational therapy	Speech & language therapy	Dietetics
32	22	42	41

DNA rate for outpatient appointments

Physiotherapy	Occupational therapy	Speech & language therapy	Dietetics
9%	8%	10%	12%

How participants have utilised the project:

- Activity data was used to give impetus to efficiency initiatives.
- Preparation for extended and/or 7-day working.
- Provided evidence in our case to have Physiotherapy in A&E.
- Secured funding for new dietetic posts where benchmarking data reinforced a need for the service.
- Enabled us to put forward a business case to retain WTE staffing.

The **Acute Therapies project** is run on a biennial cycle and last ran in the 2017/18 work programme collecting 2016/17 data. The **2019/20 project** (collecting 2018/19 data) will provide participants with a great opportunity to see how services have evolved in the last two years.

As a member of the NHS Benchmarking Network, and participant in the benchmarking projects you can access:

- A summary report showing the highlights from the latest round of analysis
- A bespoke report showing your results on key metrics
- An online toolkit showing all comparative benchmarked results
- A good practice compendium
- Presentations from the Network's annual conference on the project key findings, from national policy leads and the membership.

All project outputs are available to download from the members' area of the **NHS Benchmarking Network website**. To obtain log-in details to the website or to find out if your organisation is a member to the Network, please email **e.pruce1@nhs.net.**

Contact Us

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