

7.75 Million in England Await NHS Treatment, Reaching a New High



The NHS waiting list hits a record high, with an estimated 7.75 million people waiting to begin treatment since the end of August.

New figures emerge despite the government's commitment to reducing waiting times, which it has identified as one of its top priorities.

In addition to the growing waiting list, the wait times for patients to receive routine hospital treatment in England have also increased, with nearly 9,000 people waiting for more than 18 months at the end of August. More than 396,000 patients have been seeking treatment since the end of August.

Significant factors are to blame for the delays including ongoing doctor strikes over better pay and working conditions. Other factors include increased demand and record staff vacancies which have held back recovery efforts.

Professor Peter Friend, vice president of the Royal College of Surgeons of England, said, "Whilst NHS staff continue to work hard to reduce waiting lists, this is happening in extremely challenging circumstances - and that is before winter pressures hit".

While the recent financial boost from the government to support the health service this winter is greatly appreciated, doubts are increasing regarding the Prime Minister's commitment to reduce the waiting list size by March 2024.

More specifically, cancer waiting times have seen an increase, with data revealing that at the beginning of September, over 23,000 patients in England had been waiting longer than 62 days since an urgent GP referral for suspected cancer. Most of these patients are waiting for a diagnostic test and don't have cancer, while one in seven does have cancer and is waiting for treatment.

All cancer waiting time targets have been missed in England, and people are anxious for their cancer diagnosis or to begin treatment.

NHS England reported it successfully achieved its goal of rolling out 10,000 virtual ward beds by the end of September. Over 240,000 patients have received treatment on these virtual wards; research indicated that those treated at home recover at an equal or faster rate than in hospital.

Although September was the busiest for A&E, the NHS treated 10% more patients compared to the same month pre-pandemic.

Source: [Sky News](#)

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