# NHS Scotland Waiting Lists Surge: Over 690,000 Individuals Await Non-Urgent Care



**NHS Scotland Waiting Lists Reach Record High**

NHS Scotland's waiting lists for non-urgent care have reached a record 690,000 as of March 31, according to Public Health Scotland. The data shows over 8,000 waits exceeding two years and 85,000 waits surpassing one year for either outpatient appointments or treatment. The Scottish government is investing £30 million to address these issues, despite ongoing criticisms over its management of the health service.

Outpatient treatment waiting lists have spiked by 10% from last year to 534,178, more than doubling since the pre-pandemic period. In-patient treatment waits have seen a slight quarterly decrease but are still 5.8% higher than last year at 156,108. These figures are also more than double the average waiting times in 2019.

Plans to eradicate long waits, announced by former Health Secretary Humza Yousaf in July 2022, have yet to be achieved. Targets aimed at eliminating waits over two years by September 2022, 18 months by September 2023, and over a year by September 2024 remain unmet. Current figures indicate over 7,000 individuals still waiting more than two years, while 37,761 have waits exceeding one year.

To mitigate long waiting times, the Scottish government intends to establish 10 national treatment centres by 2026, expected to deliver 40,000 additional elective surgeries and procedures annually. However, only three centres are operational, with two more planned for this year; there is no established timeline for the remaining centres due to a pause on capital spending.

Scottish Health Secretary Neil Gray acknowledged the unacceptable wait times and emphasized ongoing efforts to reduce them through funding and national treatment services. Contrarily, opposition parties have criticized the government's handling of health care, labeling the backlog as "out of control" and calling for better management to address the crisis.