

## **STATEMENT FROM SOUTH EASTERN HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE TRUST**

Q Can the Trust comment on / explain the numbers waiting for a first appointment at a memory clinic as of January 12th last? Are there any particular challenges, such as staffing issues, that might explain why over 450 people were waiting for a first appointment in January?

It may be helpful to clarify the figures of people waiting for a first appointment. The majority of people in the January figures were within the regional performance range of 0-9 weeks. In January 155 people were waiting more than 9 weeks for a 1st appointment with the South Eastern Trust. It should be noted that the Trust receives approximately 160+ new referrals per month and has experienced a year on year increase in referrals to our Mental Health Services for Older People (MHSOP).

Q Can the Trust comment on/ explain why the waiting list was so high at the Ards Community Hospital in Newtownards where 247 people were waiting for a first appointment – are there particular pressures on the service or staffing issues in this area?

The North Down / Ards areas have both the highest demography of older people in the South Eastern Trust area and a high number of nursing / care homes. Ards has proportionately higher levels of referrals into the service directly related the surrounding aging population size .

Q Can the Trust comment on / explain why some patients are waiting up to nine months for a first appointment at a memory clinic – are there particular pressures/staffing issues at play?

As demand outstrips capacity, the Trust has made MHSOP one of our reform priorities for 2017-19. We can assure the public that urgent referrals are prioritised and allocated an appropriate clinic appointment based on their clinical need.

Q What action has the Trust taken to address current waiting lists and times?

The Trust has availed of waiting list initiative opportunities which has increased the number of appointments provided for those waiting the longest and reduced these waiting times.

Q Has the situation improved/ worsened since January?

The situation has improved as the number of people waiting more than 9 weeks for a 1st appointment in June 2017 has reduced by 10% from January 2017.