



**Independent Healthcare
Providers Network**

Independent sector healthcare

Comparative performance indicators
February 2021
Edition 68

New in this edition

Datasets updated this month include:

- CQC
- Diagnostic waiting times
- Monthly outpatient referrals¹
- Infection control data
- RTT

Since March 2020, the collection and publication of several datasets has been paused as summarised in [this letter](#). Paused datasets in this publication include:

- FFT (collection resumed in December 2020. Publication was expected in Feb 2021, but is yet to appear)
- Cancelled elective operations
- VTE – as of Feb 2021 this dataset is now well over a year old, so we have removed it from this publication. It is unclear if or when NHS England will resume publication of this dataset.

Those datasets that continue to be published, e.g. RTT show unusual patterns. We see a sharp slowdown beginning in March and April 2020, in line with the [pause in elective activity](#). Since then, independent providers have worked closely with the NHS to provide a range of services, some of which differ considerably.

For more information about the data underlying the visualisations in this presentation, please contact mail@grahamkendall.com

¹ As of August 2020, NHS England has discontinued its publications tracking elective activity. It has also reduced the range of GP referral data available. Accordingly, we have discontinued our tracking of elective activity and replaced this with analysis of the new monthly outpatient referrals dataset.

Contents

Independent sector performance	5
Friends and family test performance	7
Friends and family test – performance of all providers	8
Friends and family test – the top performers	9
Friends and family test response rates	10
CQC ratings.....	12
Overall ratings for NHS and independent acute hospitals.....	13
CQC ratings for overall performance by Key Line of Enquiry (KLOE)	14
CQC ratings – diagnostic imaging.....	15
CQC ratings – Surgery.....	16
CQC ratings – Medical care (Including older people's care)	17
Patient outcomes and safety	19
Patient Reported Outcome Measures (PROMs)	20
PROMs – primary hip replacement.....	21
PROMs – primary knee replacement	26
Infection control data.....	31
Referral to treatment times	33
Percentage of patients waiting less than 18 weeks for treatment.....	34
Typical waiting times.....	35
Average waiting times by specialty.....	37

Waiting times for most patients	40
The incomplete waiting time standard	41
Number of people waiting	42
Diagnostic waiting times	43
Number of patients referred to independent providers	45
Acute elective referrals	46
GP outpatient referrals – proportion treated by independent providers	47
Acute care specialties – mix of independent sector specialties on RTT pathway.....	48
Acute care specialties – share of all NHS patients on RTT pathway by specialty	49
Diagnostic tests carried out by independent sector by modality	50

Independent sector performance

The Independent Healthcare Providers Network (IHPN) is the representative body for independent sector healthcare providers of services ranging through acute, primary, community, clinical home healthcare, diagnostics and dental.

This document gives an overview of the performance of independent sector providers of care. It uses publicly available data, much of which relates to care provided just to NHS patients. It focuses on care sectors represented by IHPN members and the indicators available cover five broad domains of quality:

- Patient experience
- Clinical quality
- Patient outcomes and safety
- Efficiency indicators
- The contribution of the sector shown by numbers of patients treated

All the visualisations shown in this document are based on publicly available data published by organisations such as NHS England, Public Health England, NHS Digital and the Care Quality Commission. The relevant source, including links, are given by each visualisation. We also indicate whether those datasets cover both all patients or just NHS patients.

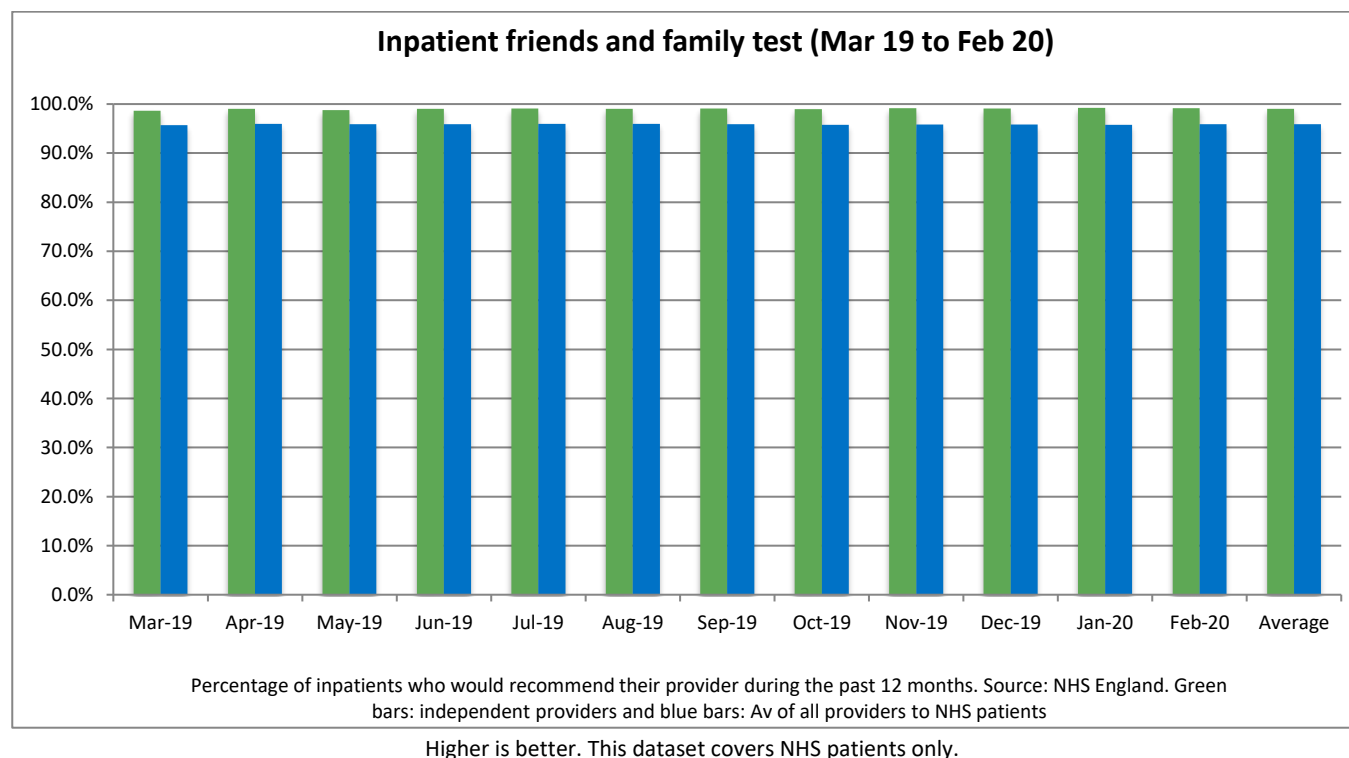
If organisations wish to refer to specific visualisations contained within this data, we recommend that the relevant source data, together with the relevant explanatory notes as published in this document, are included in any citations.

Not all data collected for traditional NHS organisations and independent sector providers can be compared easily. Historic differences in the way NHS and independent sector providers have been regulated have often required independent providers to collect different information from their NHS counterparts. As the range of information is increasingly harmonised, we hope to be able to produce more comparative information published by third parties such as the organisations listed above.

Patient experience

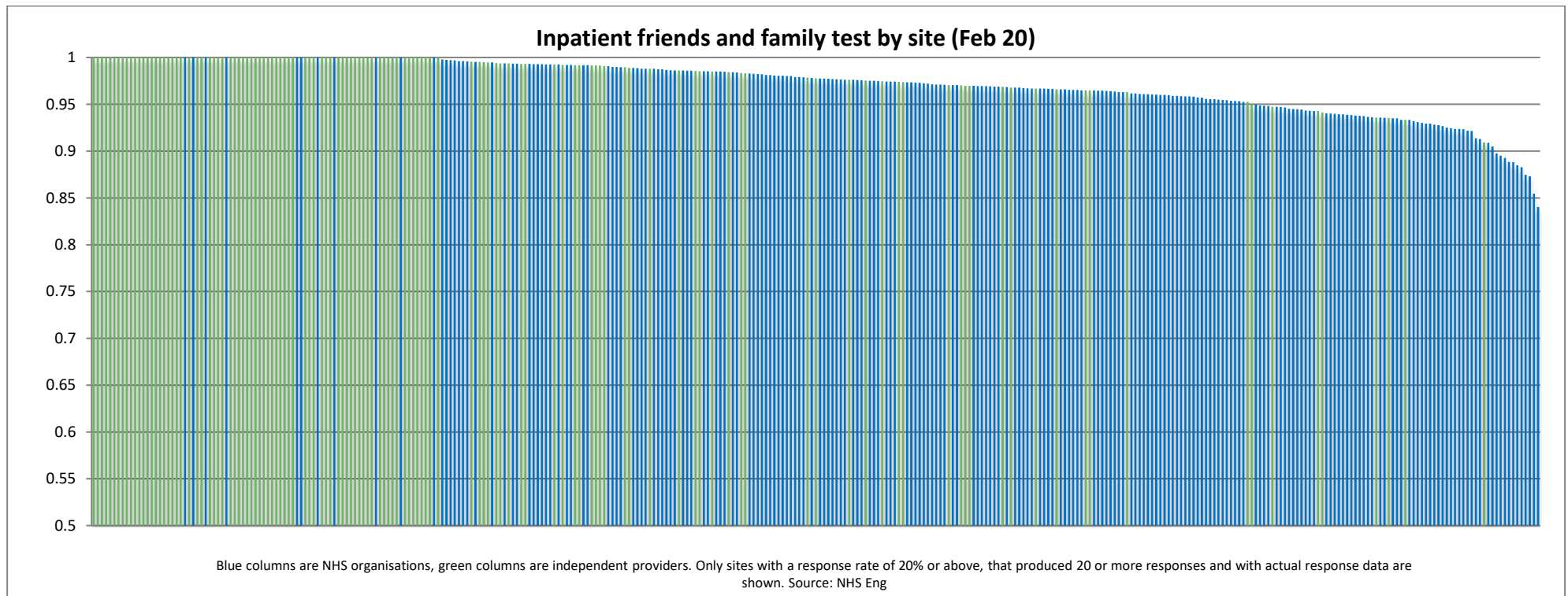
Friends and family test performance

The Government's preferred measure of patient satisfaction, the Friends and Family Test (FFT), applies equally to traditional NHS and the independent sector. Collected monthly since April 2013, around 99% of patients would be 'extremely likely' or 'likely' to recommend independent providers compared with a national average of around 96%. NB, data submission and publication for the Friends and Family Test has been paused during the response to COVID-19.



Friends and family test – performance of all providers

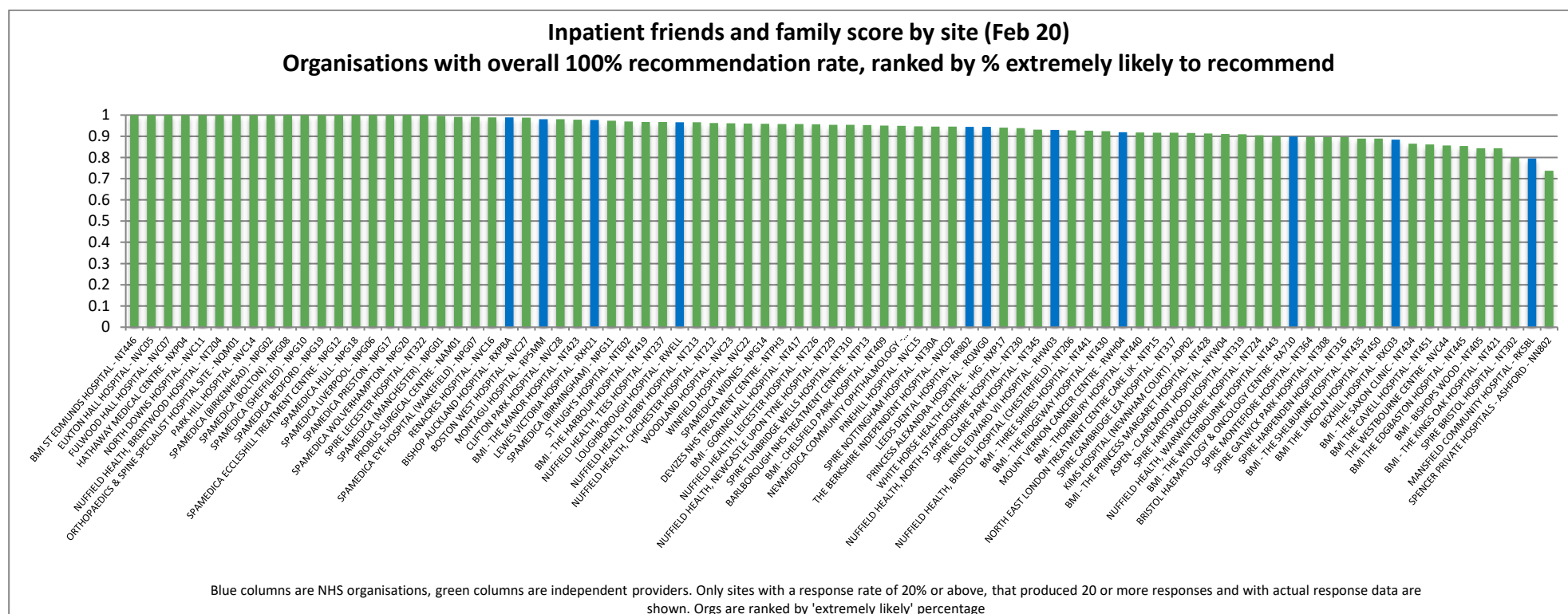
Independent providers cluster at the 'high end' of performance. The graph below shows the performance of all providers that collect the FFT for inpatient acute care and which produce a minimum response rate of 20% amounting to at least 20 patients per month. Green bars represent independent organisations and blue bars show NHS hospitals.



Higher is better. This dataset covers NHS patients only.

Friends and family test – the top performers

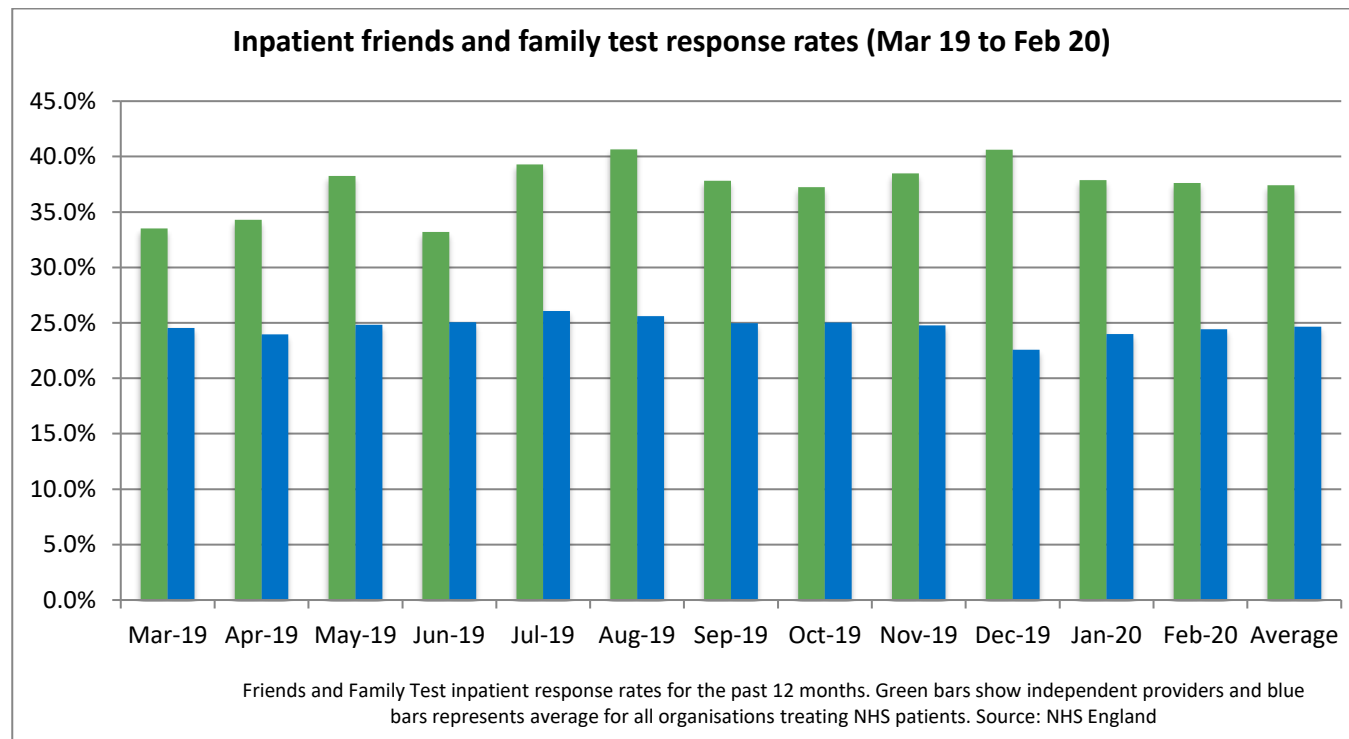
The graph below shows all those hospitals that scored a 100% recommendation rate (extremely likely and likely to recommend) as measured by patients in their response to the FFT for acute inpatient care. Within this group, organisations are ordered by those with the highest proportion of patients 'extremely likely' to recommend their providers (highest on left, lowest on right). NB some providers with an overall percentage recommendation rate below 100% may have achieved higher rates of patients 'extremely likely' to recommend them than those shown on this graph.



Higher is better. This dataset covers NHS patients only.

Friends and family test response rates

Response rates to the FFT are used by the CQC to measure NHS Trusts' reporting culture. On average independent providers manage response rates of above 35% compared with an England average of below 25%.



Higher is better. This dataset covers NHS patients only.

The data that underpins all the FFT graphs above is available at: <http://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/statistical-work-areas/friends-and-family-test/friends-and-family-test-data/>

Clinical quality

CQC ratings

The graphs that follow show how independent healthcare organisations compare to NHS healthcare organisations, using the CQC's data and definitions².

Overall ratings for NHS and independent acute hospitals (non-specialist hospitals):

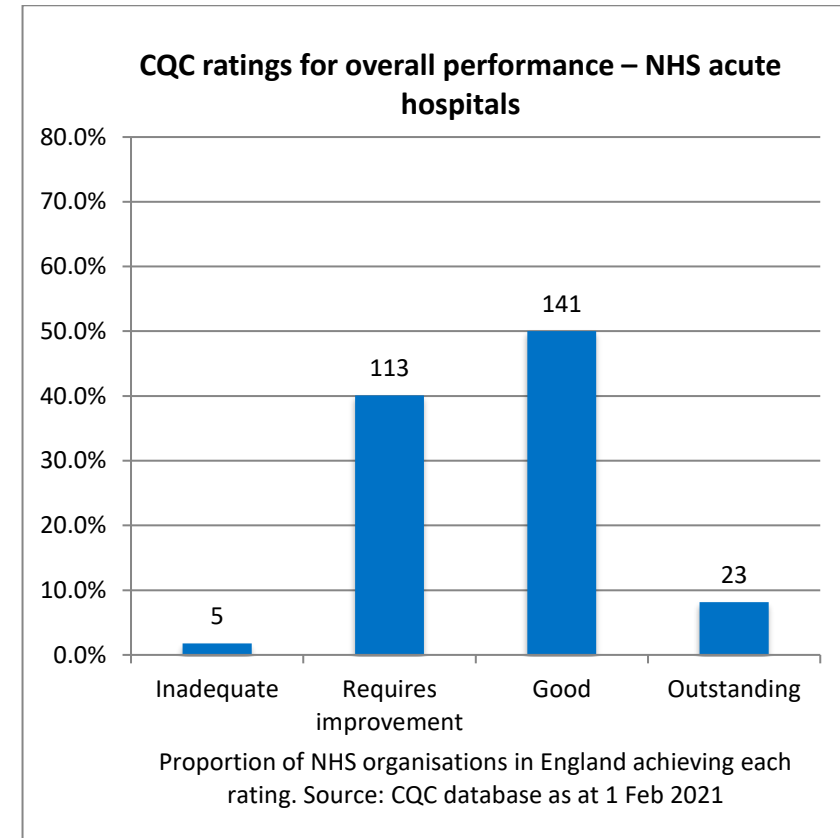
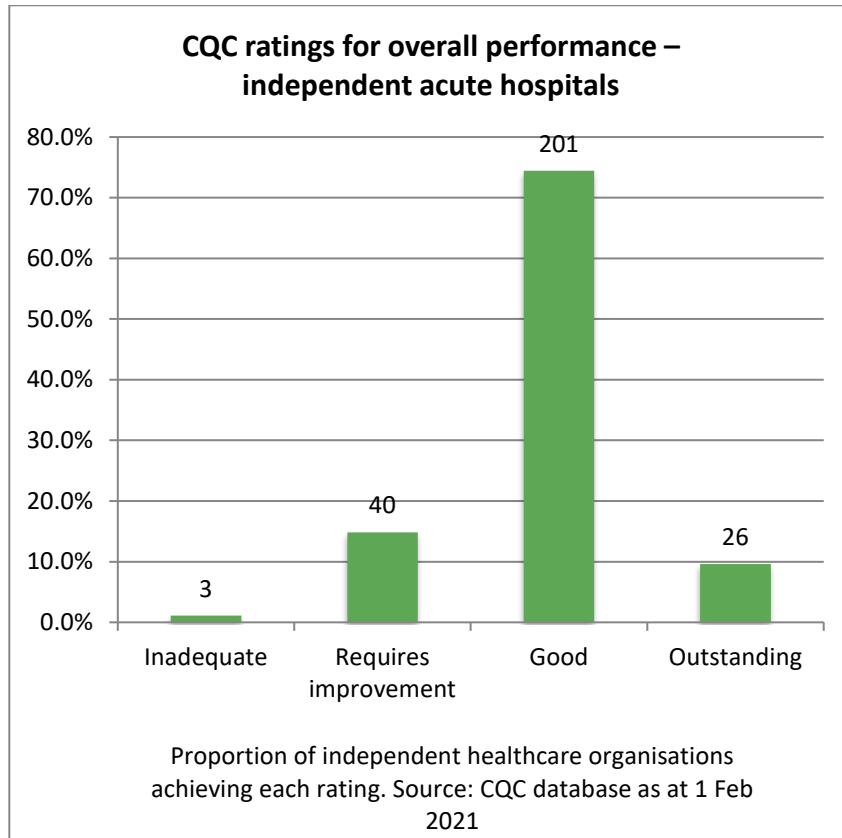
Organisation type	Rating	Total	Inadequate	Requires improvement	Good	Outstanding
Acute hospital - Independent non-specialist	Overall	270	3	40	201	26
Acute hospital - NHS non-specialist	Overall	282	5	113	141	23

This dataset covers providers including those that treat NHS patients, private patients or a combination of both.

² <http://www.cqc.org.uk/content/how-get-and-re-use-cqc-information-and-data>

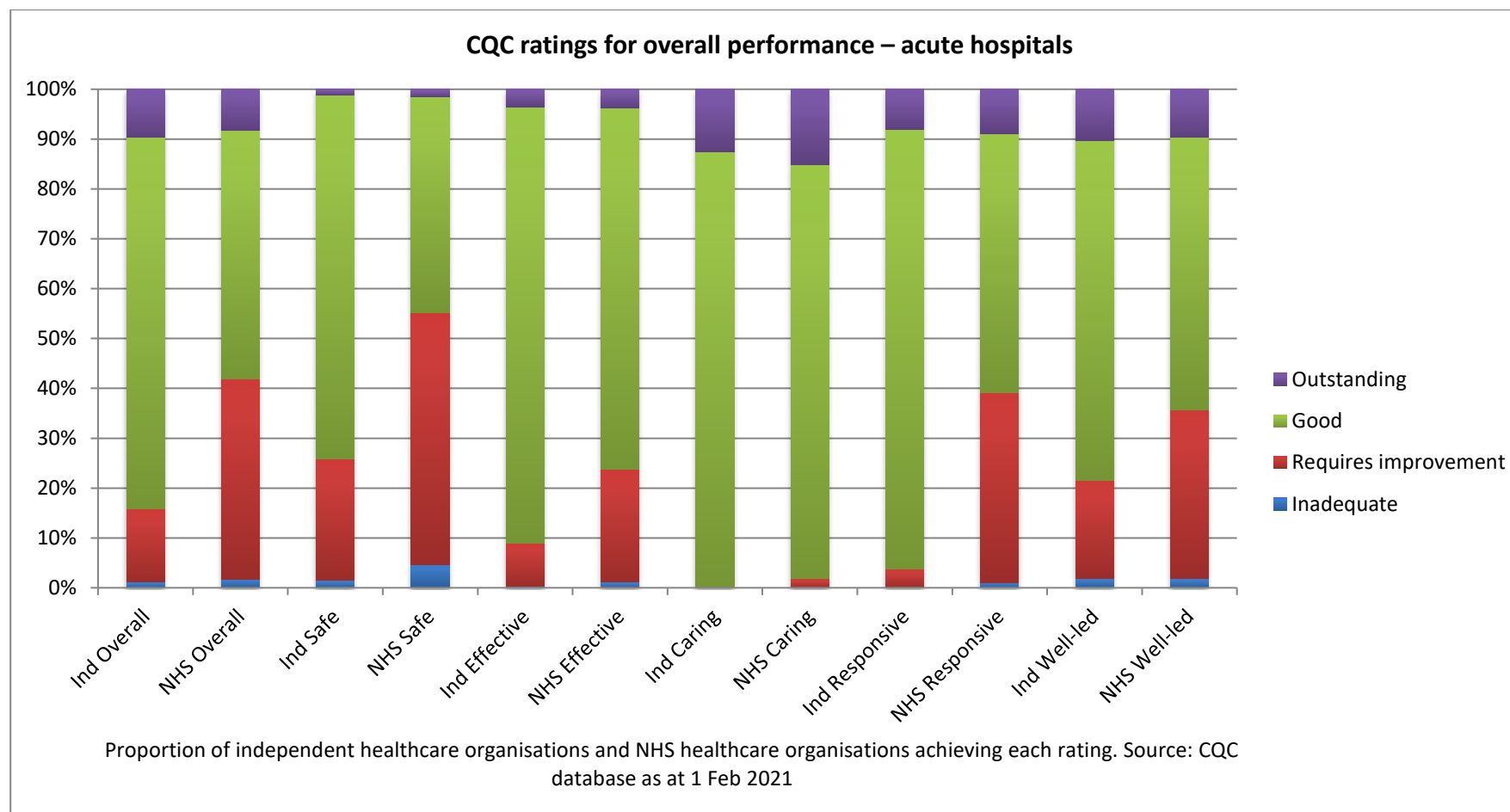
Overall ratings for NHS and independent acute hospitals

Non-specialist acute hospitals



Independent providers in this dataset treat NHS and private patients.

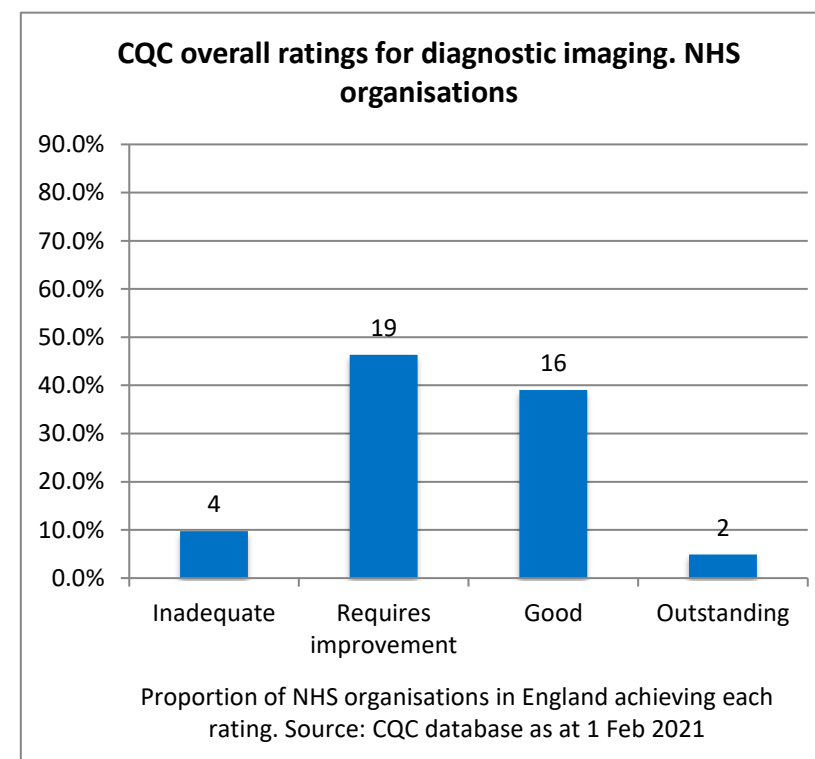
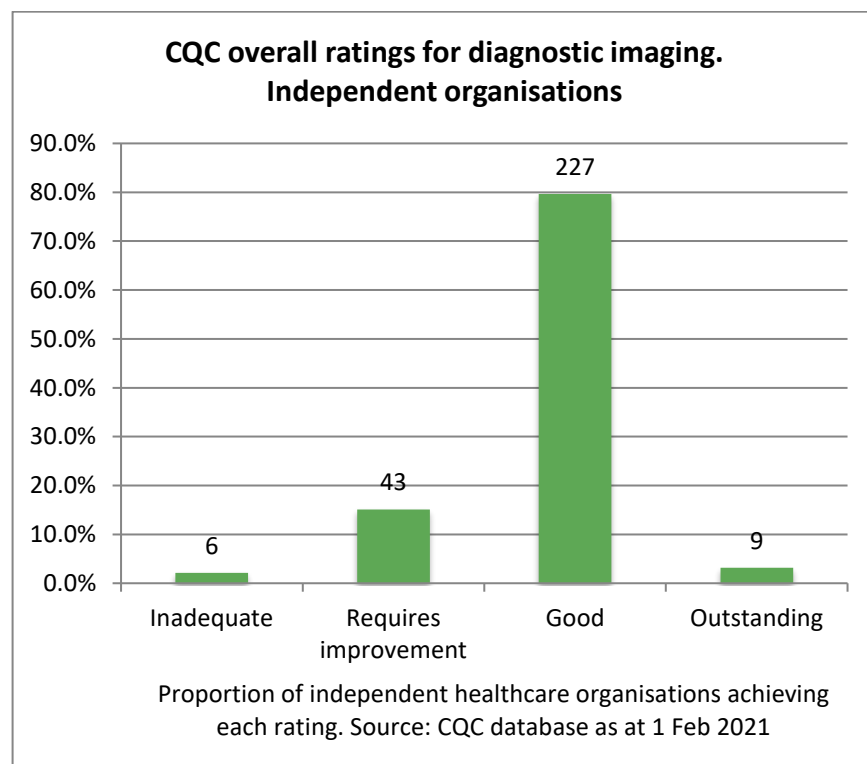
CQC ratings for overall performance by Key Line of Enquiry (KLOE)



Independent providers in this dataset treat NHS and private patients.

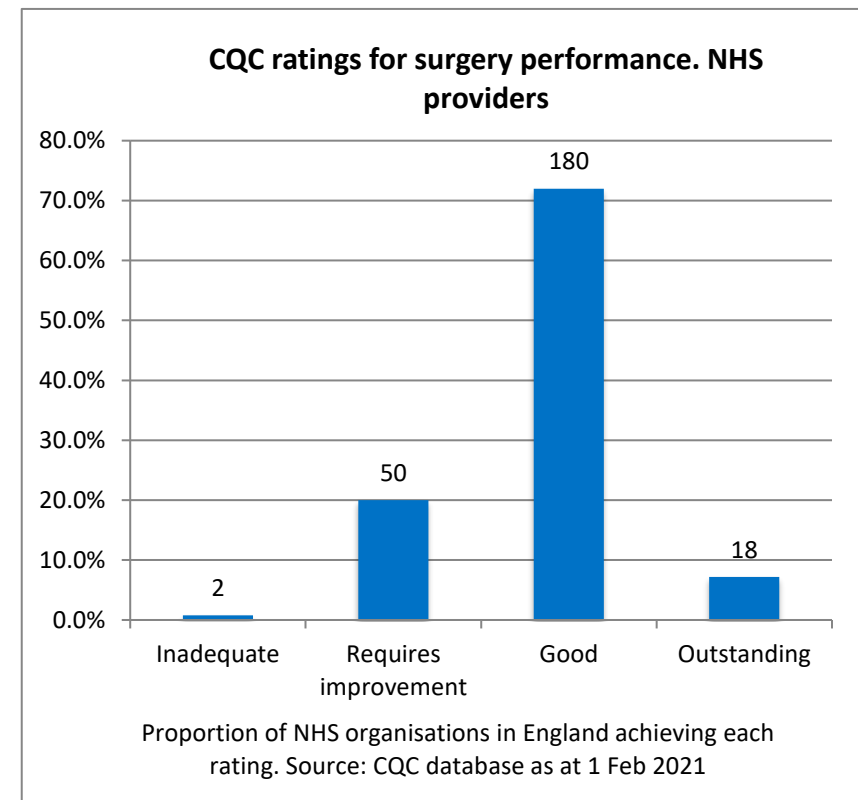
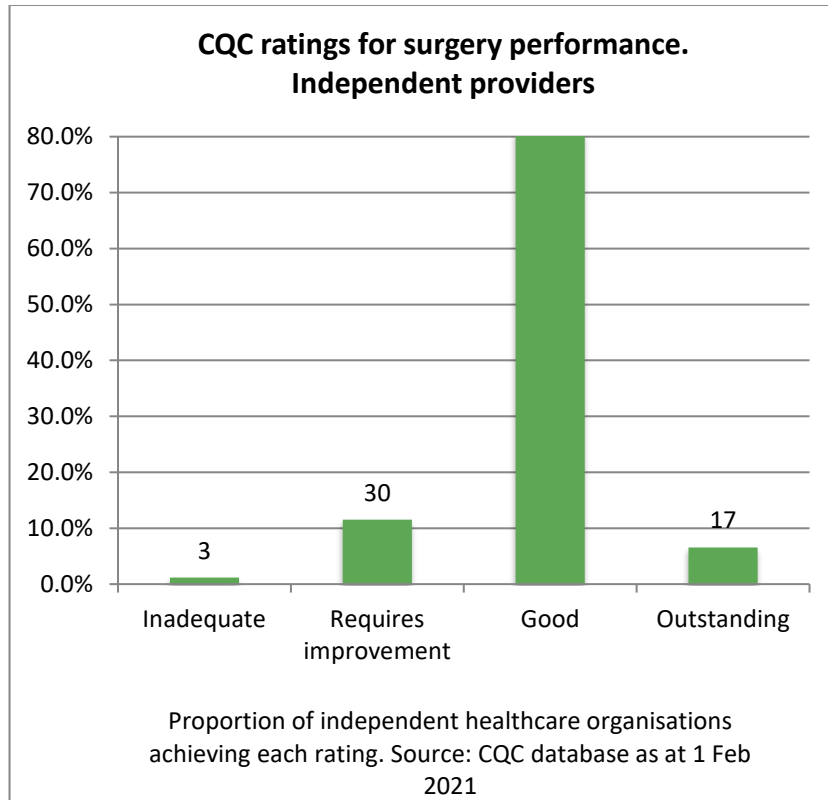
CQC ratings – diagnostic imaging

NB until relatively recently, diagnostics and outpatients were assessed as a single category. They are now rated separately (see [CQC announcement from June 2018](#)). Since the new approach was introduced, more independent diagnostic providers have been rated than NHS organisations, hence the notable differences in the number of organisations listed below.



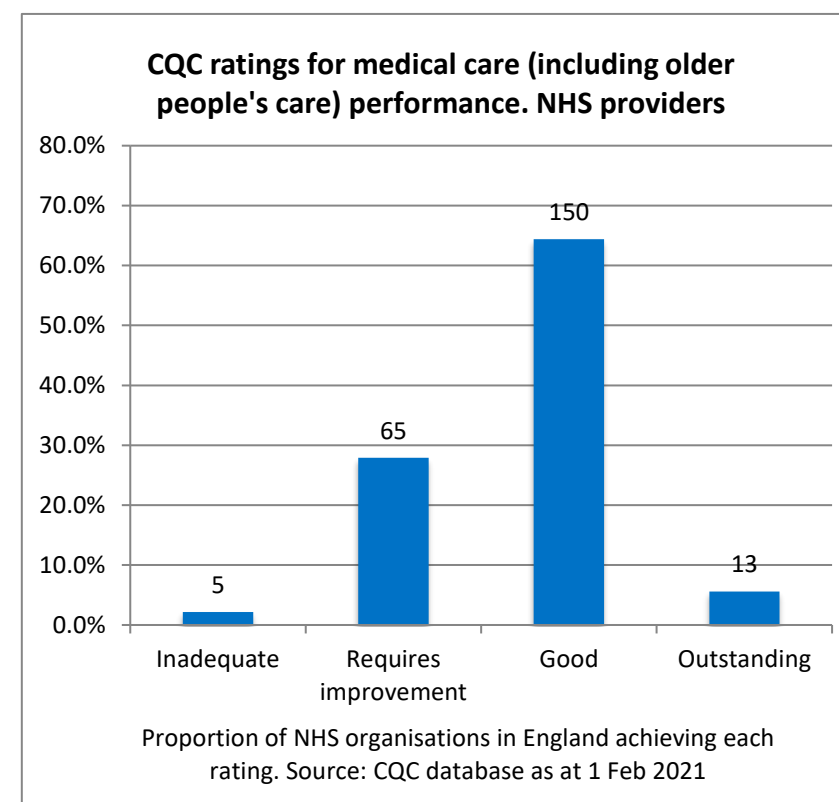
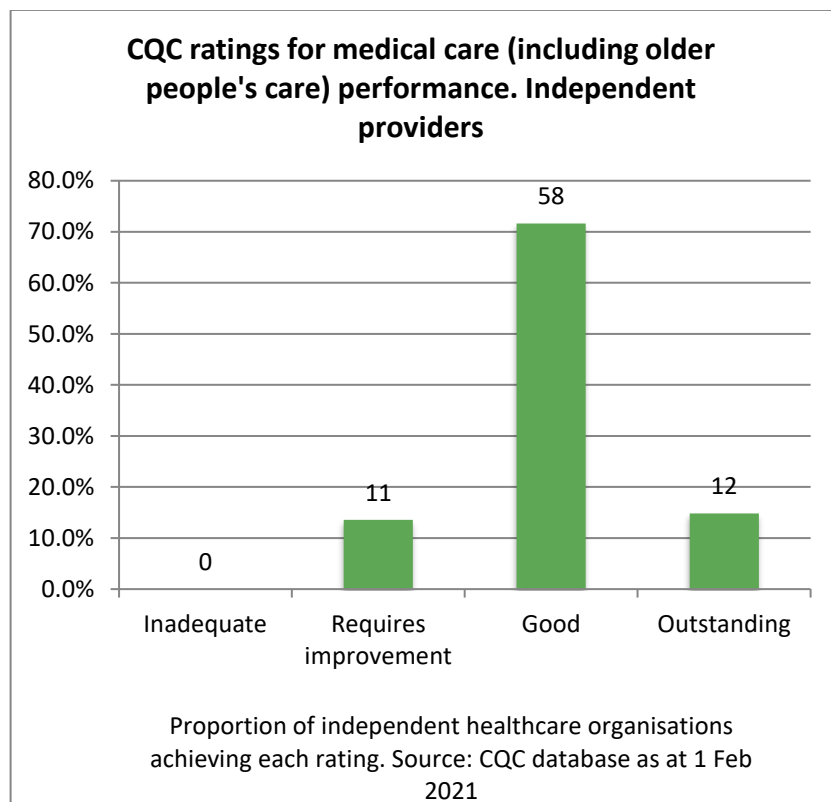
Independent providers in this dataset treat NHS and private patients.

CQC ratings – Surgery



Independent providers in this dataset treat NHS and private patients.

CQC ratings – Medical care (Including older people's care)



Independent providers in this dataset treat NHS and private patients.

Patient outcomes and safety

Patient outcomes and safety

Indicators that relate to outcomes and safety for which it is reasonable to make comparisons between independent sector organisations and their NHS counterparts include Patient Reported Outcome Measures (PROMs).

Infection control information is also an important indicator. Because Public Health England analyses information collected for the independent sector and the NHS organisations on a different basis, its view is that like-for-like comparison should not be made. For completeness, we have published rates for independent sector providers in the pages that follow. These show that independent providers have very low rates of healthcare-acquired infections.

Patient Reported Outcome Measures (PROMs)

Patient Reported Outcome Measures (PROMs) are collected by NHS Digital for hip and knee replacements. This dataset covers NHS patients treated by independent providers.

NHS Digital publishes casemix-adjusted health gain by provider in February and August. The graphs that follow are based on the most recently available 12-month period (April 2018 to March 2019, final data, February 2020 release).

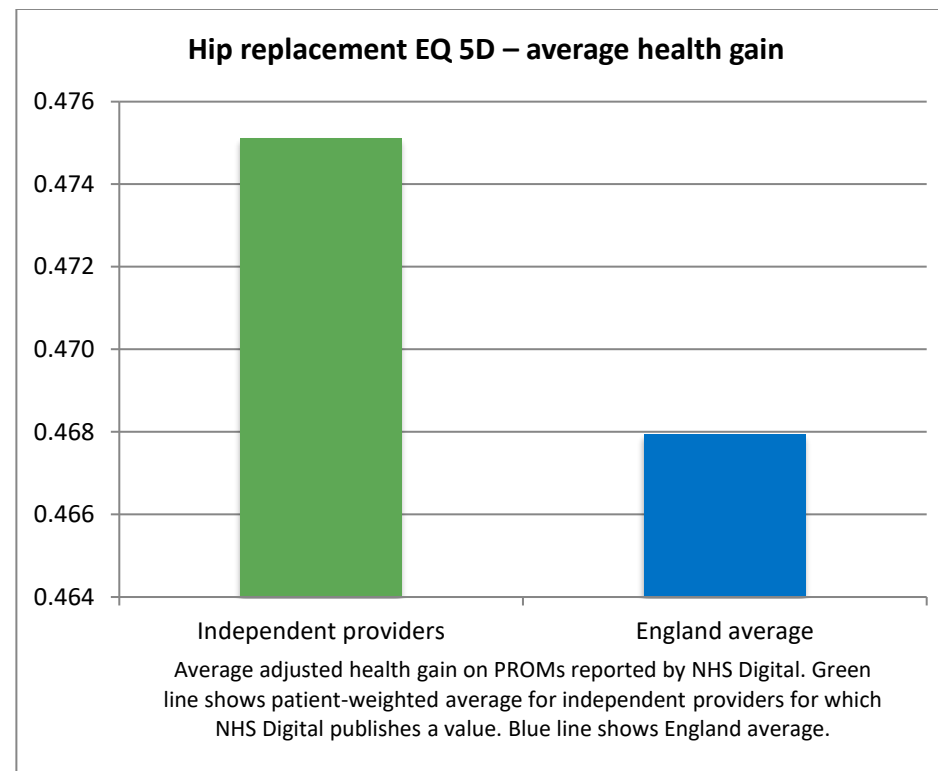
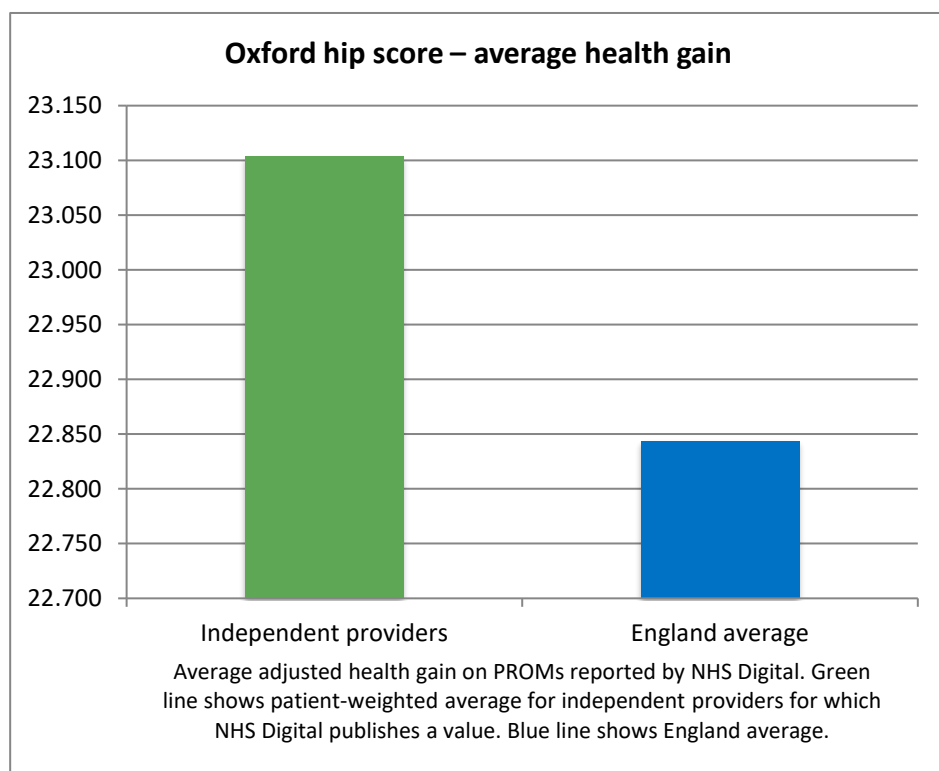
PROMs data is not published for all organisations that submit completed PROMs questionnaires. NHS Digital collects data from every organisation that offers these types of surgery as it is a national requirement that all organisations should offer PROMs questionnaires to patients eligible to participate. However, it is voluntary for patients to complete these forms and NHS Digital only publishes adjusted data for organisations that have a representative number of completed records.

The pages that follow use data from NHS Digital (<https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/data-tools-and-services/data-services/patient-reported-outcome-measures-proms>) for two different types of PROMs scores for primary knee and hip replacements (PROMs April 2019 to March 2020 prov - August 2020 release). These graphs show adjusted health gain. The original source files provided by NHS Digital should be used to identify positive and negative statistical outliers.

The Oxford Scores focus on joint function and pain and include questions about patients' mobility and factors such as ability to navigate stairs and use transport specifically affected by the hip or knee. More information about these measures is available at <https://innovation.ox.ac.uk/clinical-outcomes/patient-reported-outcome-measures/page/2/>. The EQ-5D™ score, developed by the EuroQol Group, is a standardised instrument for use as a measure of health outcome and has a broader base than the Oxford scores. Its questions relate to mobility, self-care, usual life activities, pain/discomfort and anxiety/depression. More information about the EQ-5D is available at <http://www.euroqol.org>. NHS Digital also provides an informative guide to PROMs methodology used by the Centre, available at <http://content.digital.nhs.uk/article/3843/Background-information-about-PROMs>.

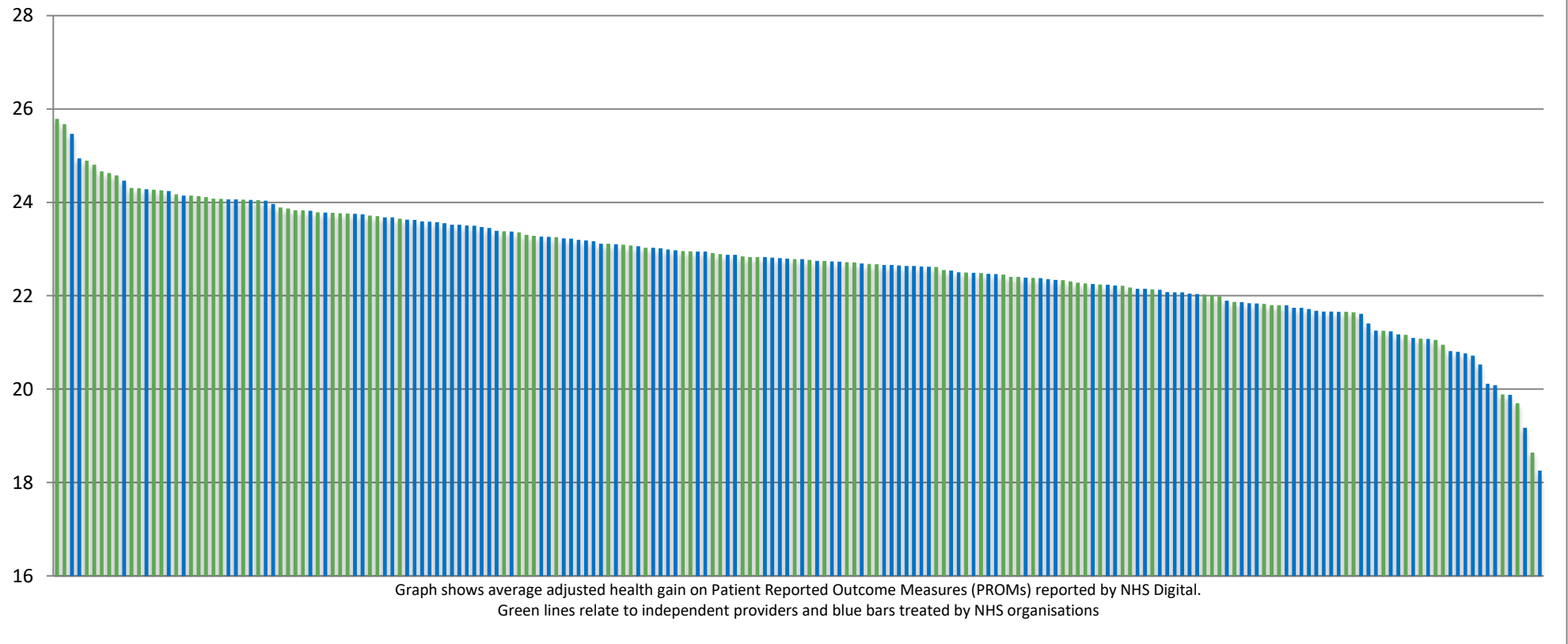
PROMs – primary hip replacement

The tables below show average adjusted health gain on PROMs reported by NHS Digital for independent providers compared to the national average.

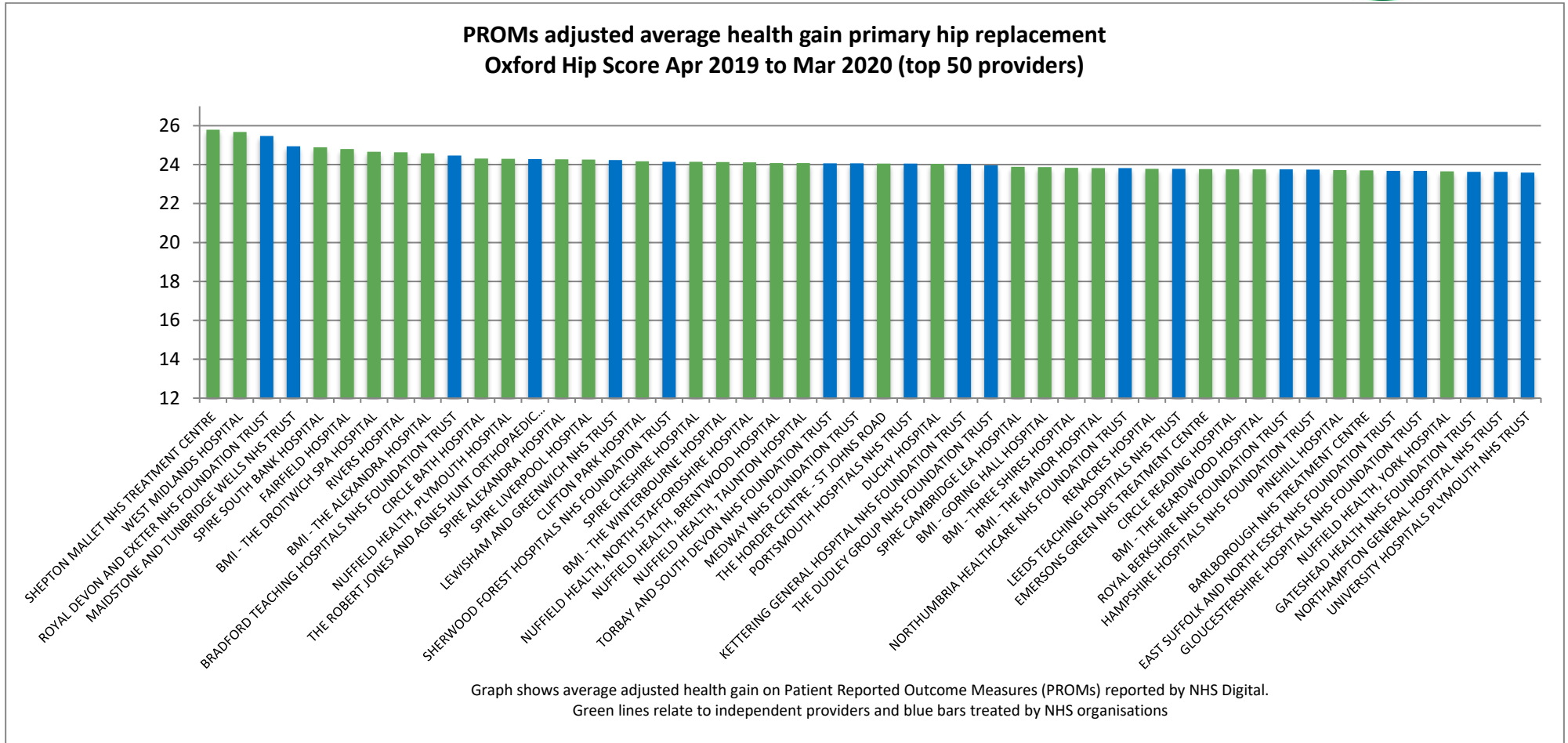


Higher is better. This dataset covers NHS patients treated by independent providers.

**PROMs adjusted average health gain primary hip replacement
Oxford Hip Score Apr 2019 to Mar 2020**

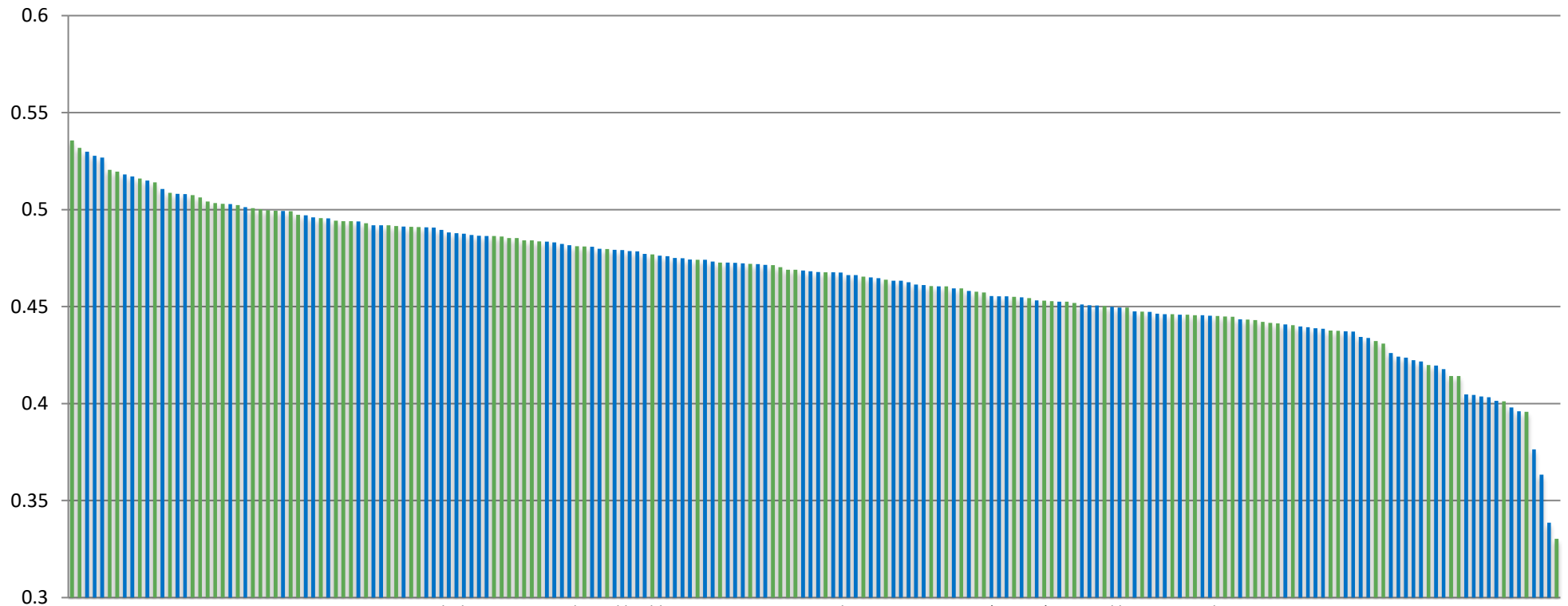


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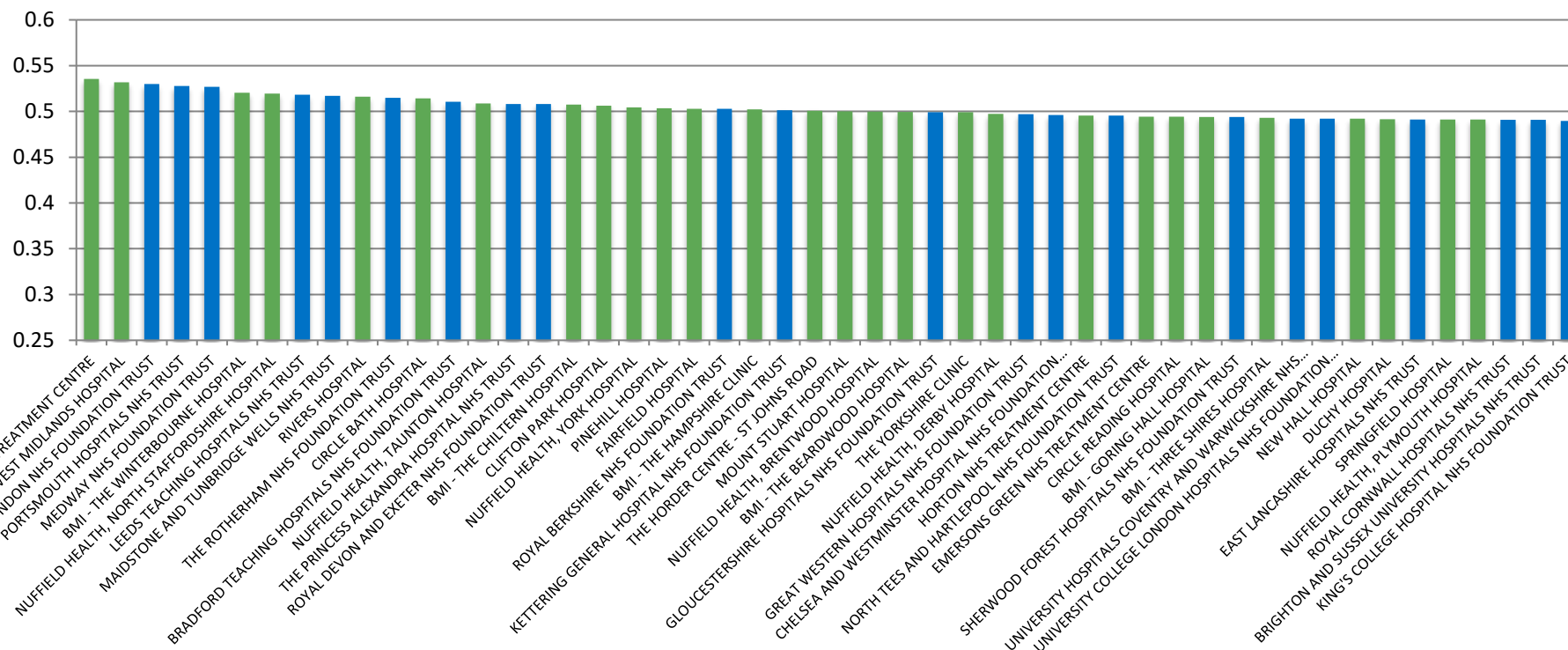
**PROMs adjusted average health gain primary hip replacement
EQ-5D Score Apr 2019 to Mar 2020**



Graph shows average adjusted health gain on Patient Reported Outcome Measures (PROMs) reported by NHS Digital.
Green lines relate to independent providers and blue bars treated by NHS organisations

Higher is better. This dataset covers NHS patients treated by independent providers.

**PROMs adjusted average health gain primary hip replacement
EQ-5D Score Apr 2019 to Mar 2020 (top 50 providers)**

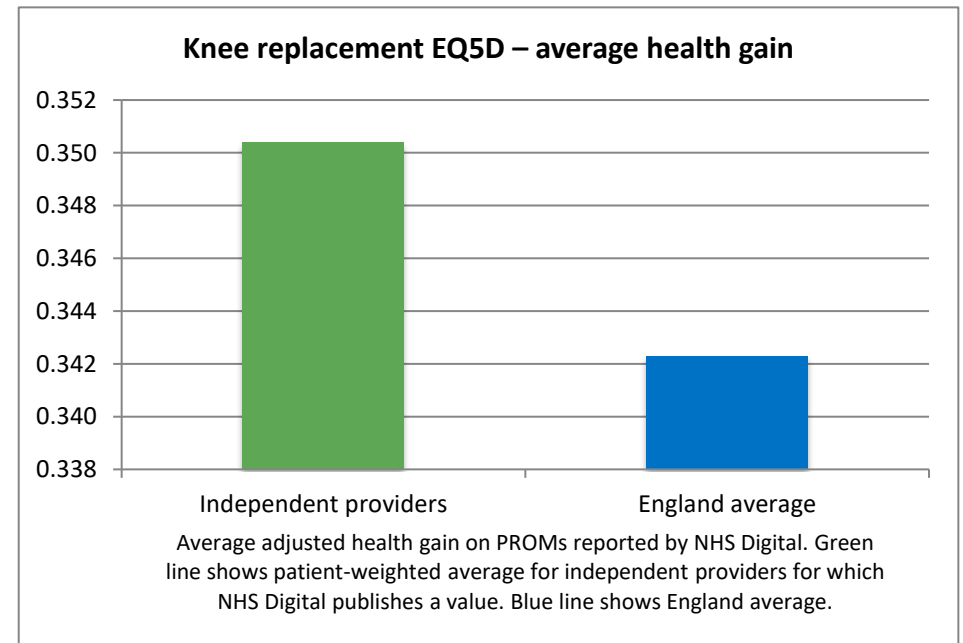
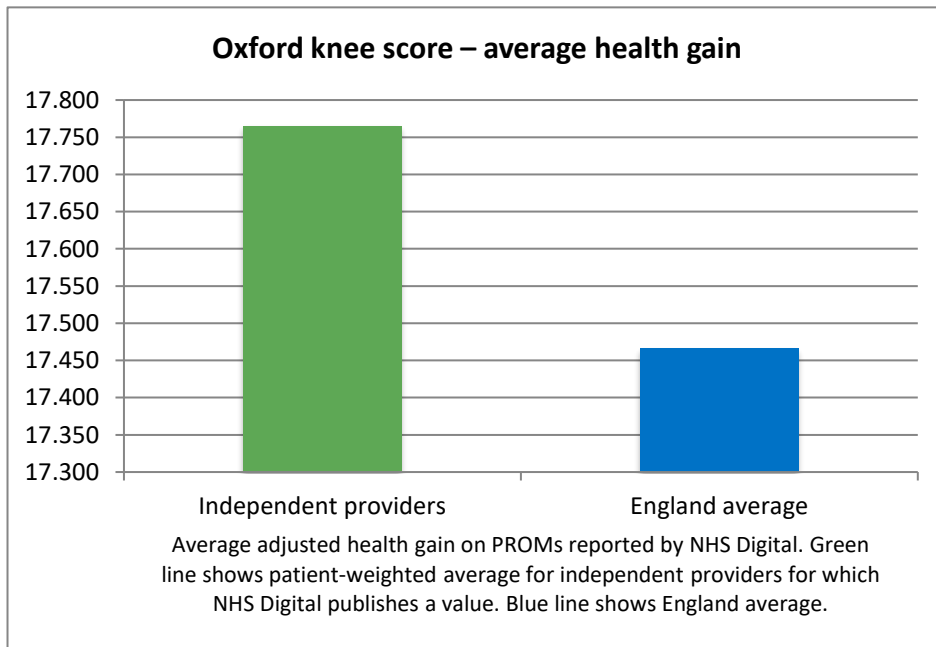


Graph shows average adjusted health gain on Patient Reported Outcome Measures (PROMs) reported by NHS Digital.
Green lines relate to independent providers and blue bars treated by NHS organisations

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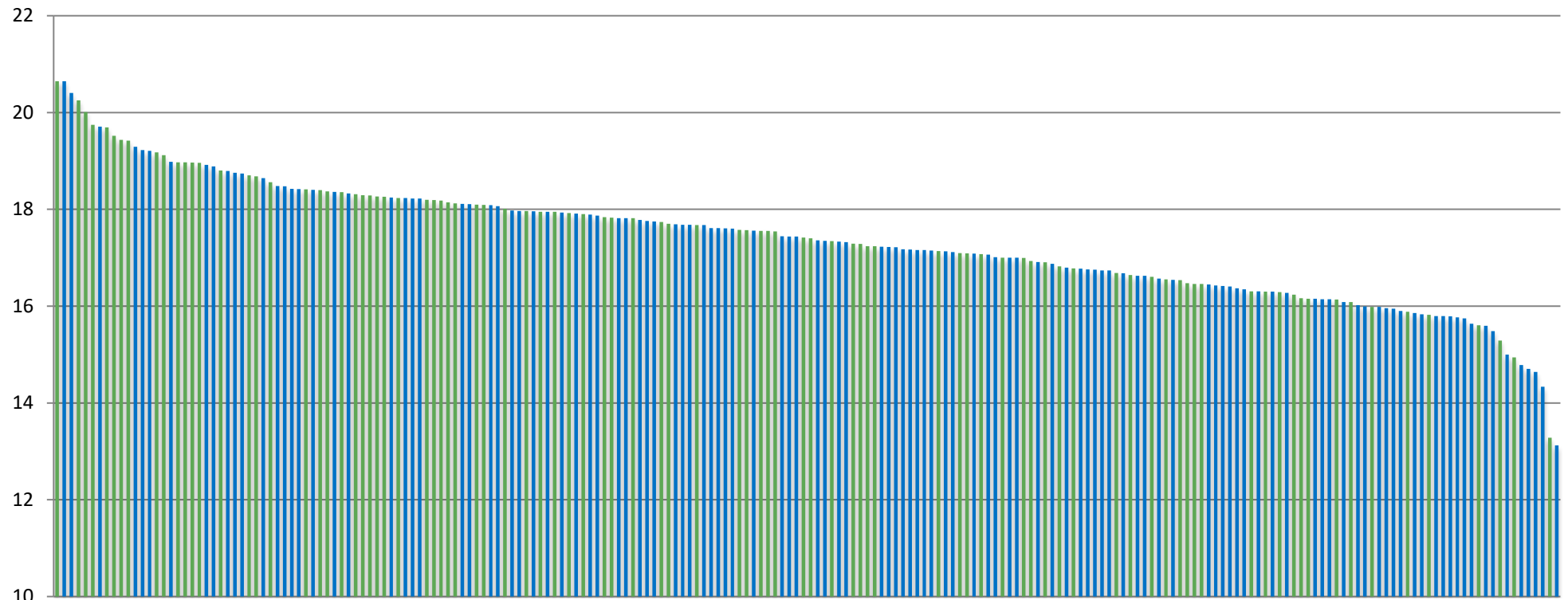
PROMs – primary knee replacement

The tables below show average adjusted health gain on PROMs reported by NHS Digital for independent providers compared to the national average.



Higher is better. This dataset covers NHS patients treated by independent providers.

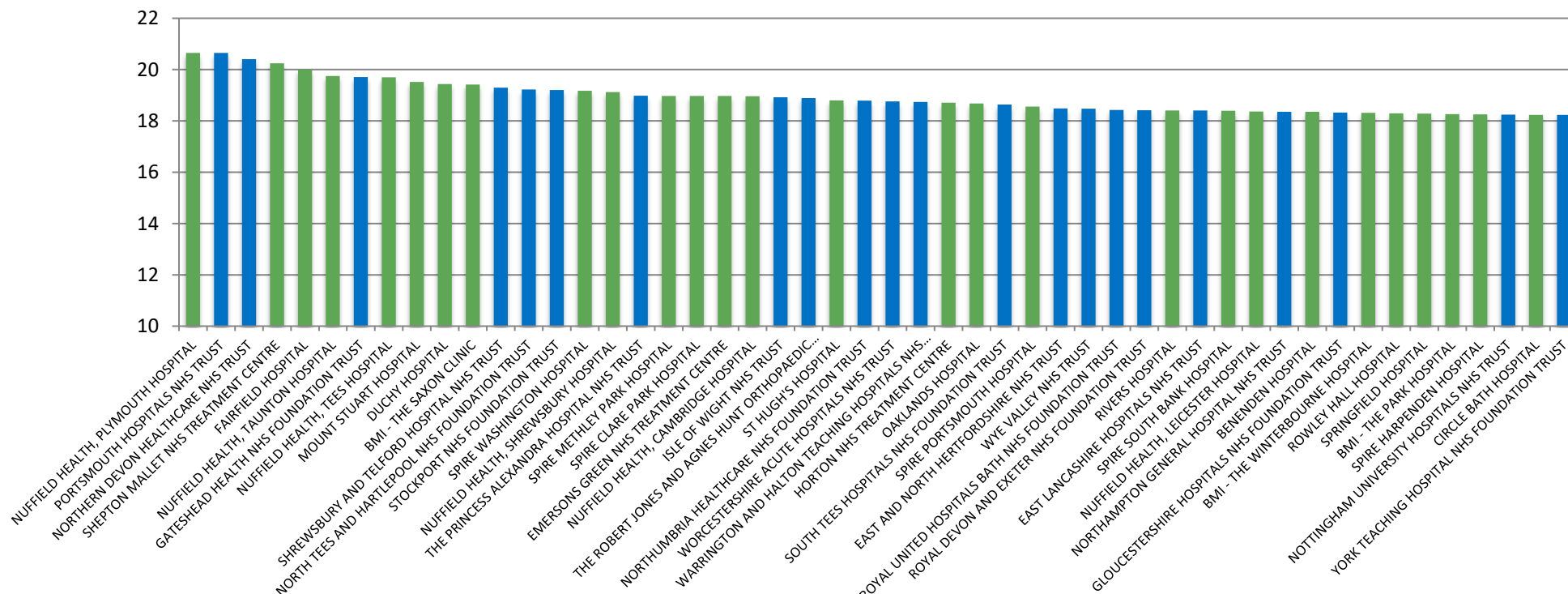
PROMs adjusted average health gain primary knee replacement Oxford knee Score Apr 2019 to Mar 2020



Graph shows average adjusted health gain on Patient Reported Outcome Measures (PROMs) reported by NHS Digital.
Green lines relate to independent providers and blue bars treated by NHS organisations

Higher is better. This dataset covers NHS patients treated by independent providers.

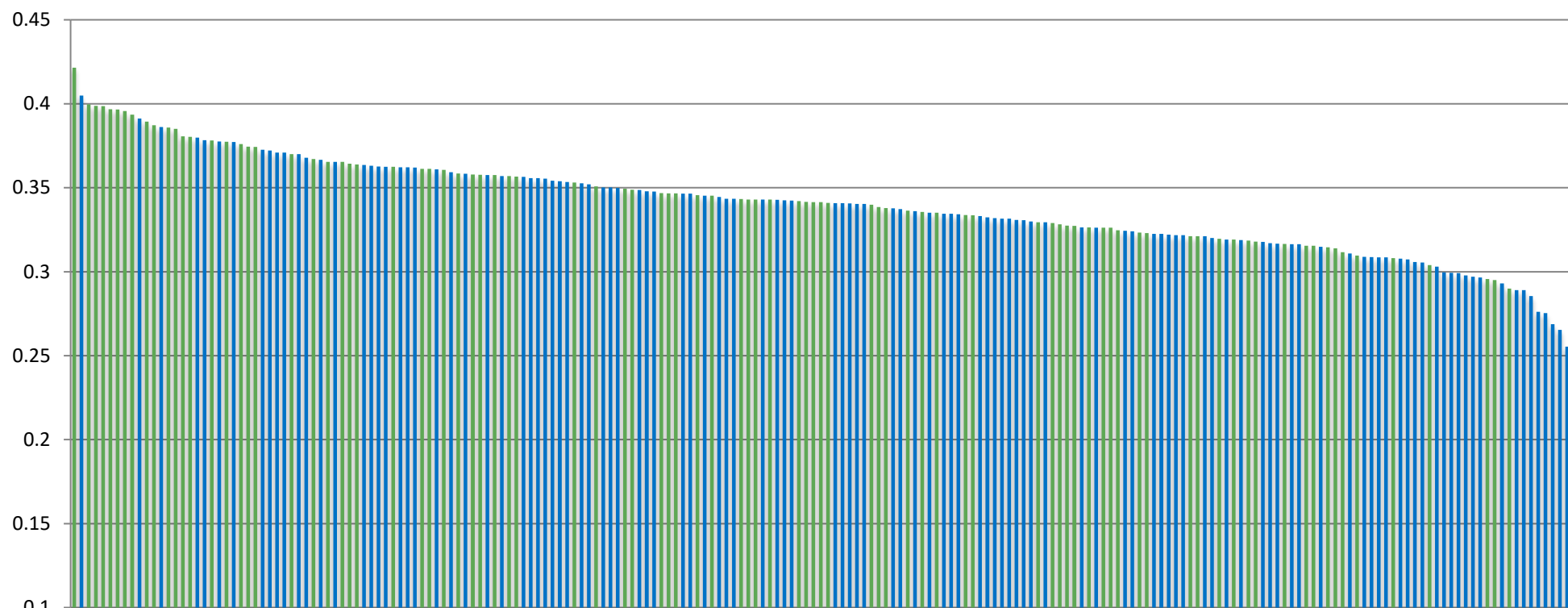
**PROMs adjusted average health gain primary knee replacement
Oxford knee Score Apr 2019 to Mar 2020 (top 50 providers)**



Graph shows average adjusted health gain on Patient Reported Outcome Measures (PROMs) reported by NHS Digital.
Green lines relate to independent providers and blue bars treated by NHS organisations

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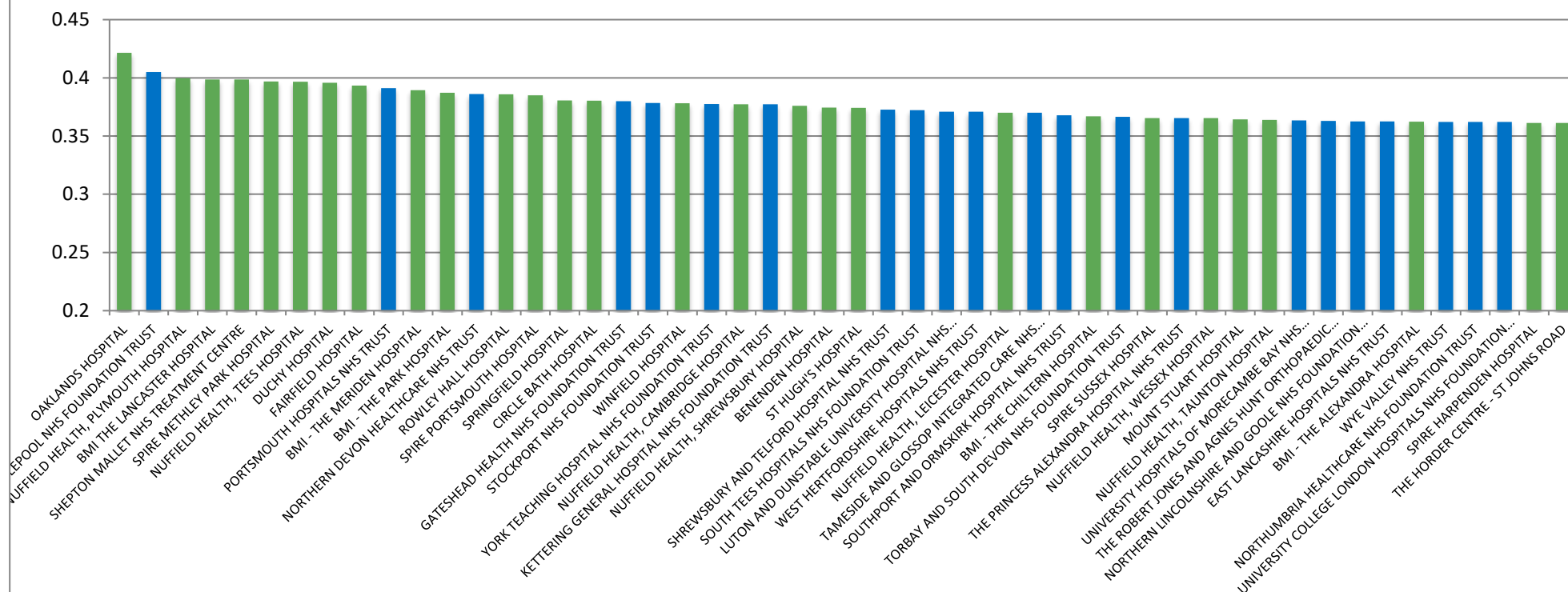
PROMs adjusted average health gain primary knee replacement EQ-5D Score Apr 2019 to Mar 2020



Graph shows average adjusted health gain on Patient Reported Outcome Measures (PROMs) reported by NHS Digital.
Green lines relate to independent providers and blue bars treated by NHS organisations

Higher is better. This dataset covers NHS patients treated by independent providers.

PROMs adjusted average health gain primary knee replacement EQ-5D Score Apr 2019 to Mar 2020 (top 50 providers)



Graph shows average adjusted health gain on Patient Reported Outcome Measures (PROMs) reported by NHS Digital.
Green lines relate to independent providers and blue bars treated by NHS organisations

Higher is better. This dataset covers NHS patients treated by independent providers.

Infection control data

Infection control information that allows direct comparisons between the NHS and independent sector is not available. In 2009, the Health Protection Agency, now part of Public Health England, which has responsibility for collecting infection-control data, published its rationale for this approach [here](#). This is summarised on page 1 of the commentary linked below.

Despite this lack of comparative information, Public Health England data makes it clear that healthcare acquired infection rates are very low in the independent sector. During the twelve months between April 2019 and March 2020, the total number of reported infections across the entire independent estate (NHS-funded and privately funded care) was just:

	2019-20	2019-20
	No of cases	Rate per 100,000
MRSA bacteraemia	4	0.2
C difficile infection	81	3.3
MSSA bacteraemia	34	1.5
E. coli bacteraemia	149	6.9
Klebsiella spp bacteraemia	79	3.6
P aeruginosa bacteraemia	43	2.0

Lower is better. This dataset covers NHS and private patients.

The number of modified bed-days³ published by Public Health England for this twelve-month period was 2,117,015.

Source: Public Health England (<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/mrsa-mssa-and-e-coli-bacteraemia-and-clostridium-difficile-infection-annual-data-for-independent-sector-healthcare-organisations>)

³ Modified bed-days are calculated as the number of bed-days plus the number of discharges.

Efficiency indicators

Referral to treatment times

In 2020 we saw unprecedented changes in elective activity in response to Covid. Far fewer patients presented for treatment and there was a sizeable reduction in the amount of activity carried out in these areas during the Spring of 2020.

As activity has resumed towards the end of the year, many independent providers have changed large elements of the activity they perform to carry out urgent treatment for those NHS patients in most pressing clinical need. Consequently, many of the graphs that follow show unusual patterns when compared to historic trends.

There are three ways of measuring waiting times:

- Those currently waiting for treatment (the incomplete pathway)
- How long outpatients who have been treated spent waiting in total (the non-admitted pathway)
- How long inpatients who have begun their treatment spent waiting in total (the admitted adjusted pathway)

In June 2015, NHS England announced that only the incomplete standard would be enforced. However, data will still be collected on all three measurements.

The incomplete standard states that 92% of patients on incomplete pathways should have been waiting no more than 18 weeks from referral.

The graphs below show that across almost all specialties, patients spend less time waiting when treated by independent providers. This dataset covers NHS patients only.

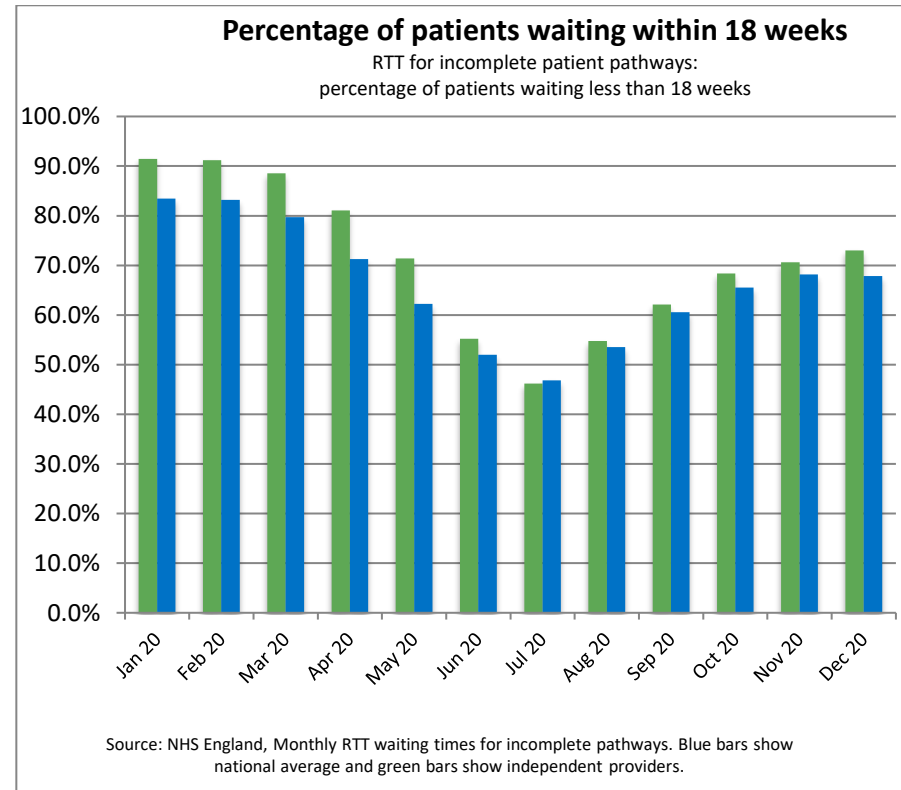
Mean* and median waiting times are generally shorter across most specialties for outpatients treated by independent providers compared with their NHS peers. Although the median waiting time is now broadly similar for inpatients treated by independent and NHS providers, a greater proportion of inpatients are treated within 18 weeks by independent providers compared to the national average.

<http://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/statistical-work-areas/rtt-waiting-times/>

* NB Means have been inferred from data published by NHS England. This data shows numbers of patients waiting between 1 and 2 weeks, 2 and 3 weeks, etc. up to 52+ weeks for RTT times and 13+ weeks for diagnostic waiting times. Mean values have been calculated on the assumption that patients who have been waiting between 1 and 2 weeks have waited an average of 1.5 weeks etc. Also, for those patients waiting longer than 52 weeks (RTT) or 13 weeks (diagnostics), we have used values of 52.5 (RTT) and 13.5 weeks (diagnostics) which is likely to be an underestimate. As we are looking at national trends rather than specific provider-level performance we have counted all patients when calculating means rather than excluding organisations with low volumes.

Percentage of patients waiting less than 18 weeks for treatment

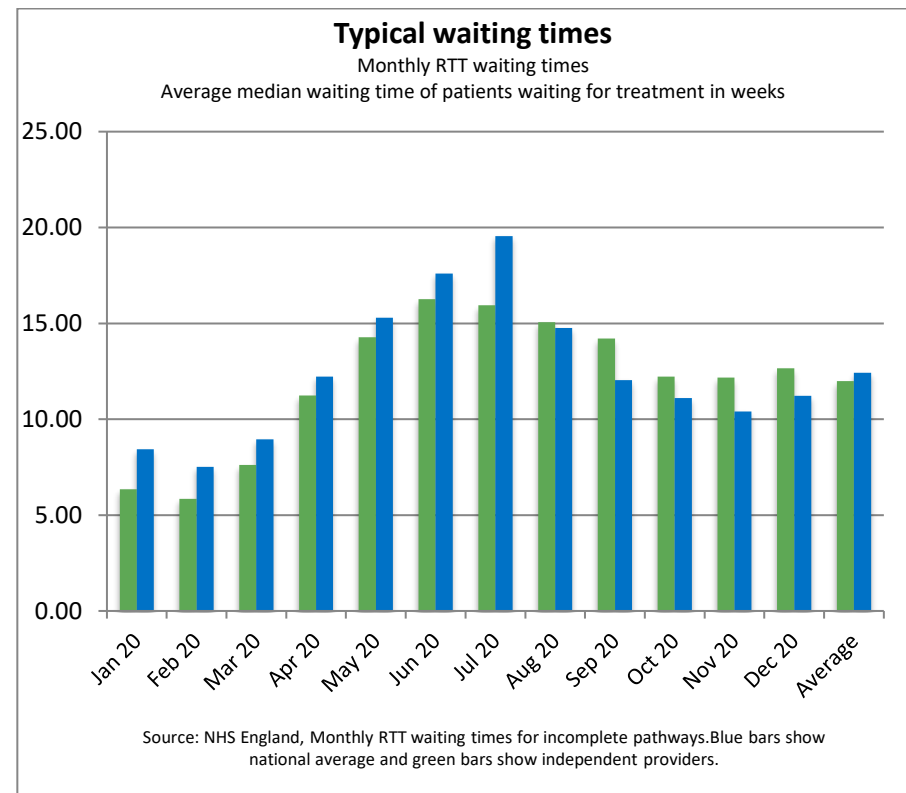
The incomplete waiting time shows the number of patients currently waiting. NHS standards state that no more than 8% of patients should be waiting for longer than 18 weeks, i.e. the percentage of patients waiting less than 18 weeks should be 92% or above.



Higher is better. Expected performance: 92% or above. This dataset covers NHS patients treated by independent providers.

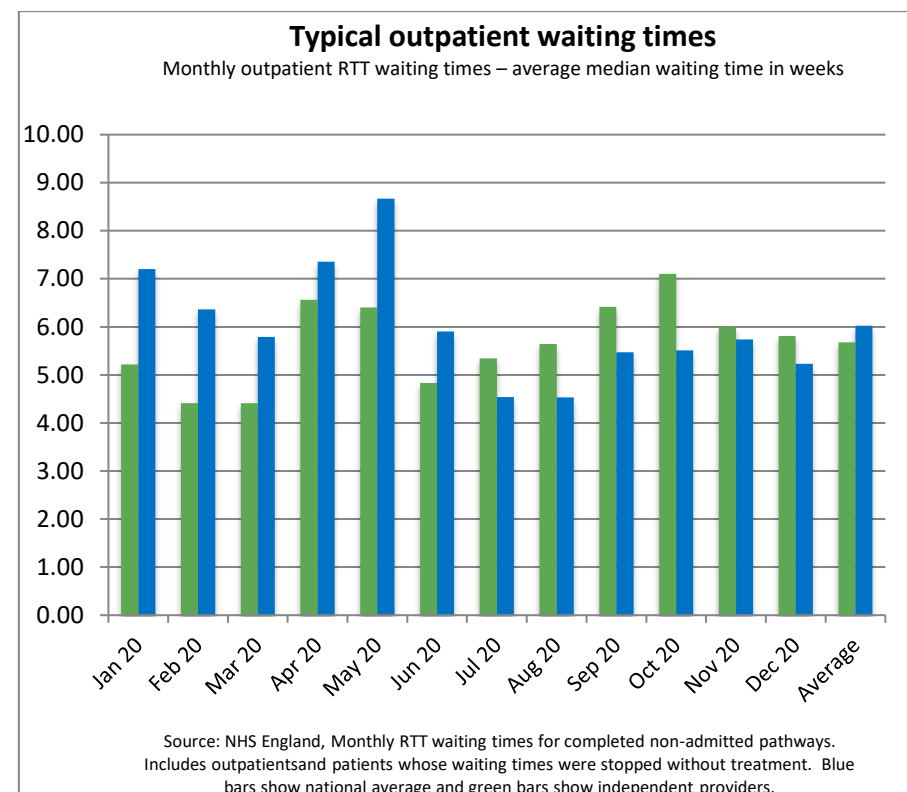
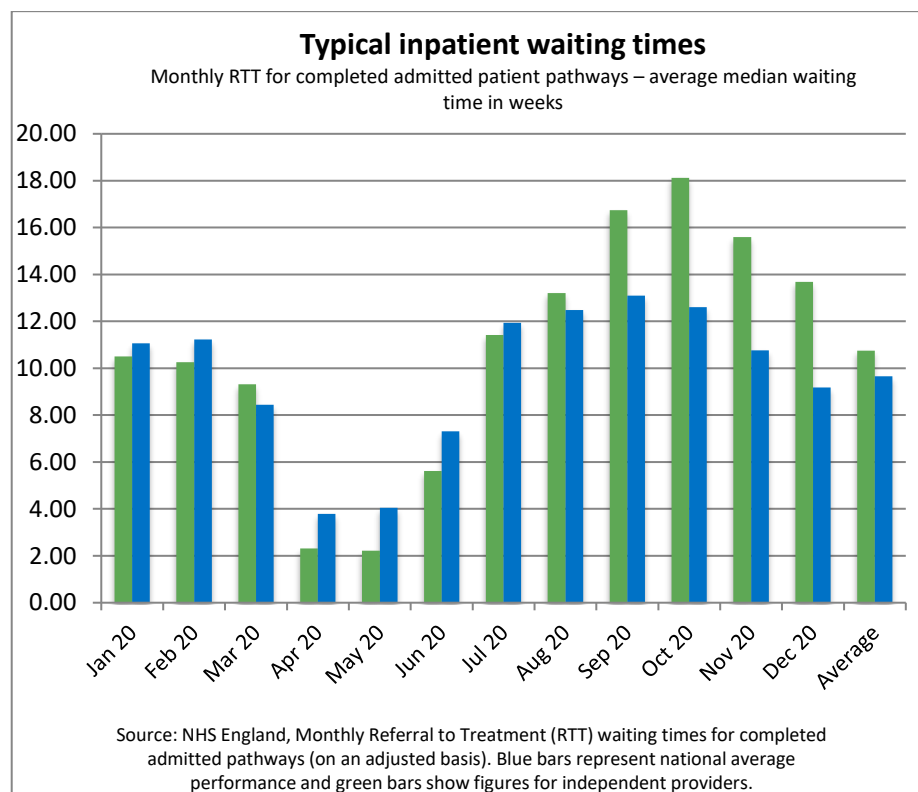
Typical waiting times

Median waiting times illustrate the typical experience of most patients when waiting for care. The graph below shows how long each person typically had spent waiting for treatment who was still on the waiting list in each month (the incomplete median waiting time).



Lower is better. This dataset covers NHS patients treated by independent providers.

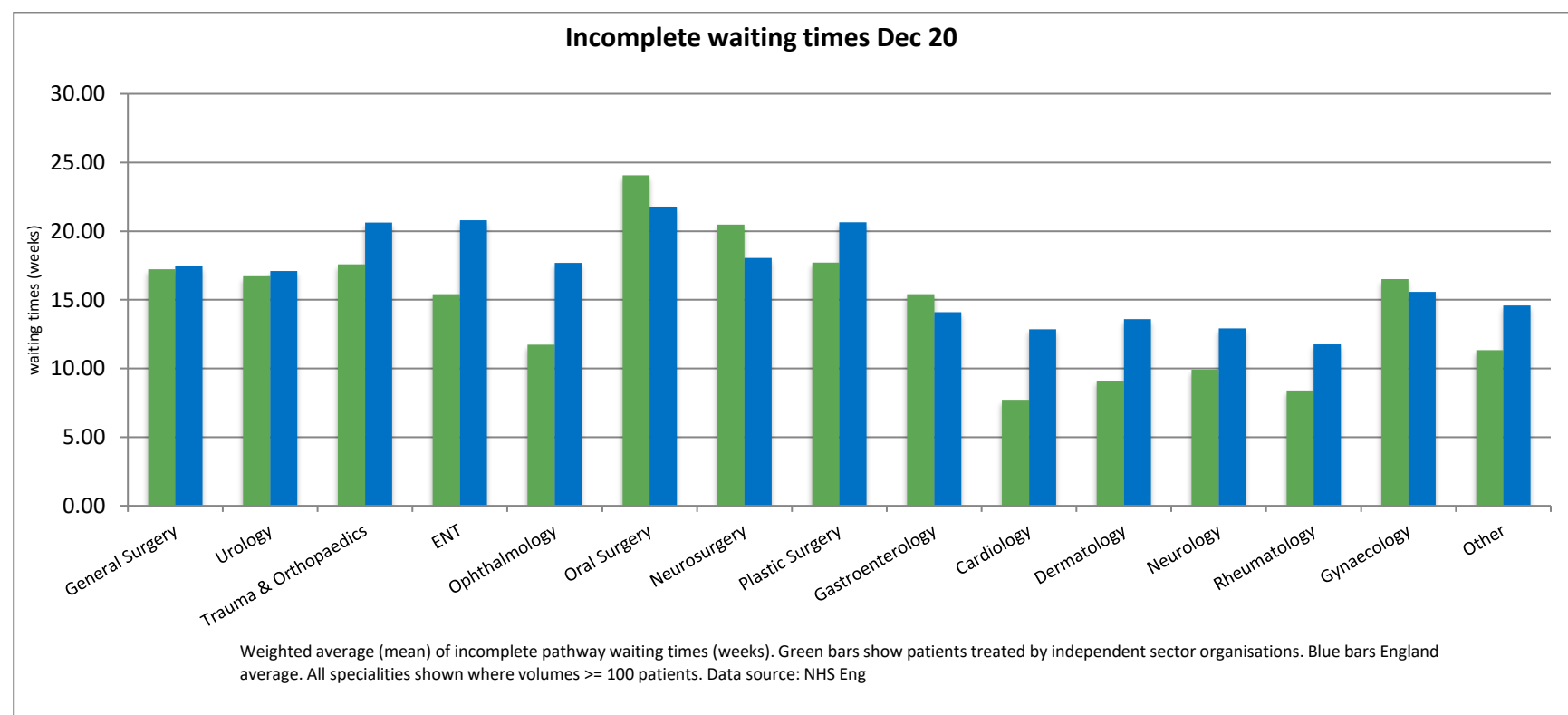
The graphs below show typical time spent waiting in total for treatment (median).



Lower is better. This dataset covers NHS patients treated by independent providers.

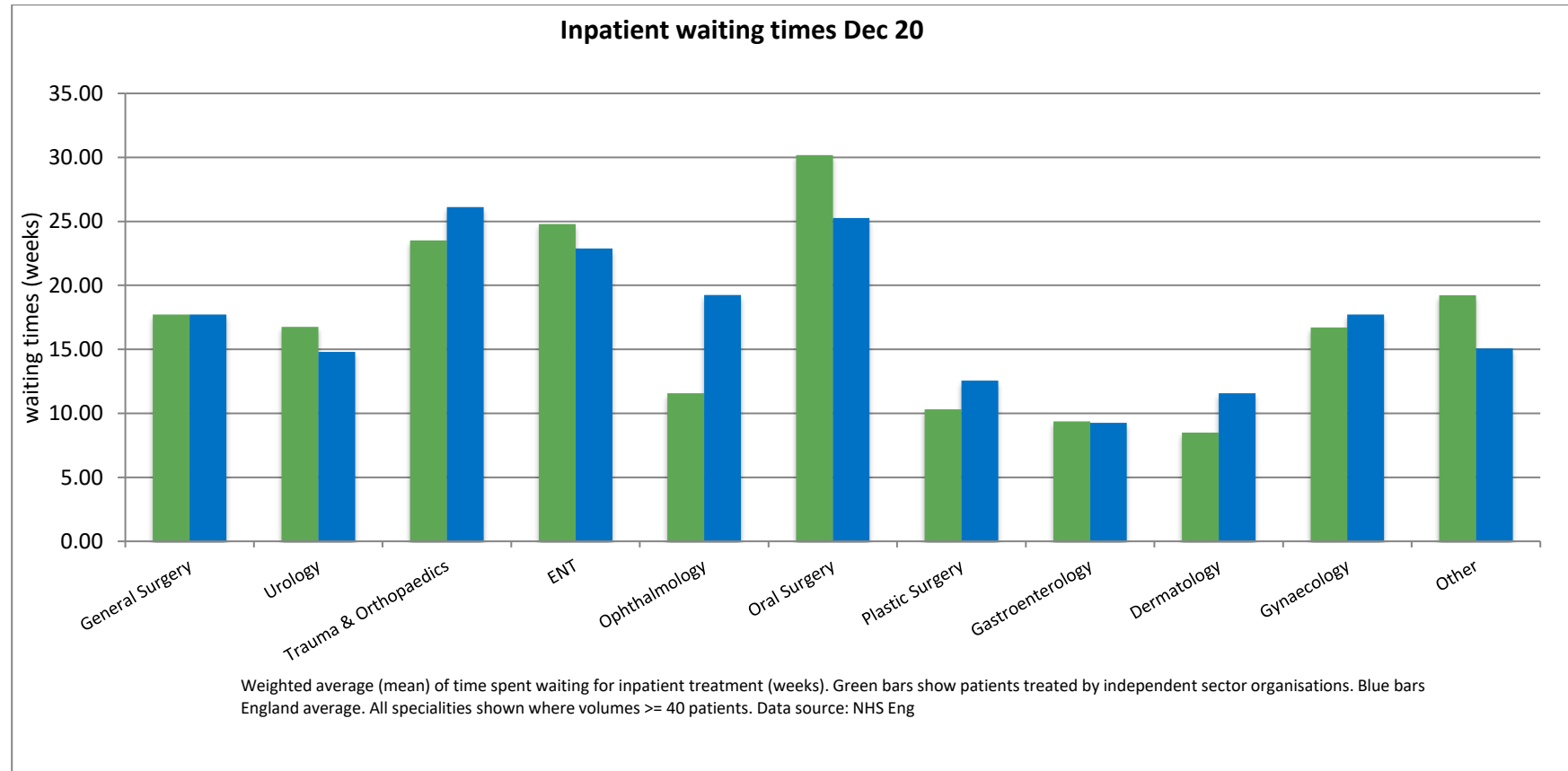
Average waiting times by specialty

The graphs below show a weighted average (mean) waiting times by specialty. This graph shows how long patients still waiting for treatment had already spent on the waiting list.



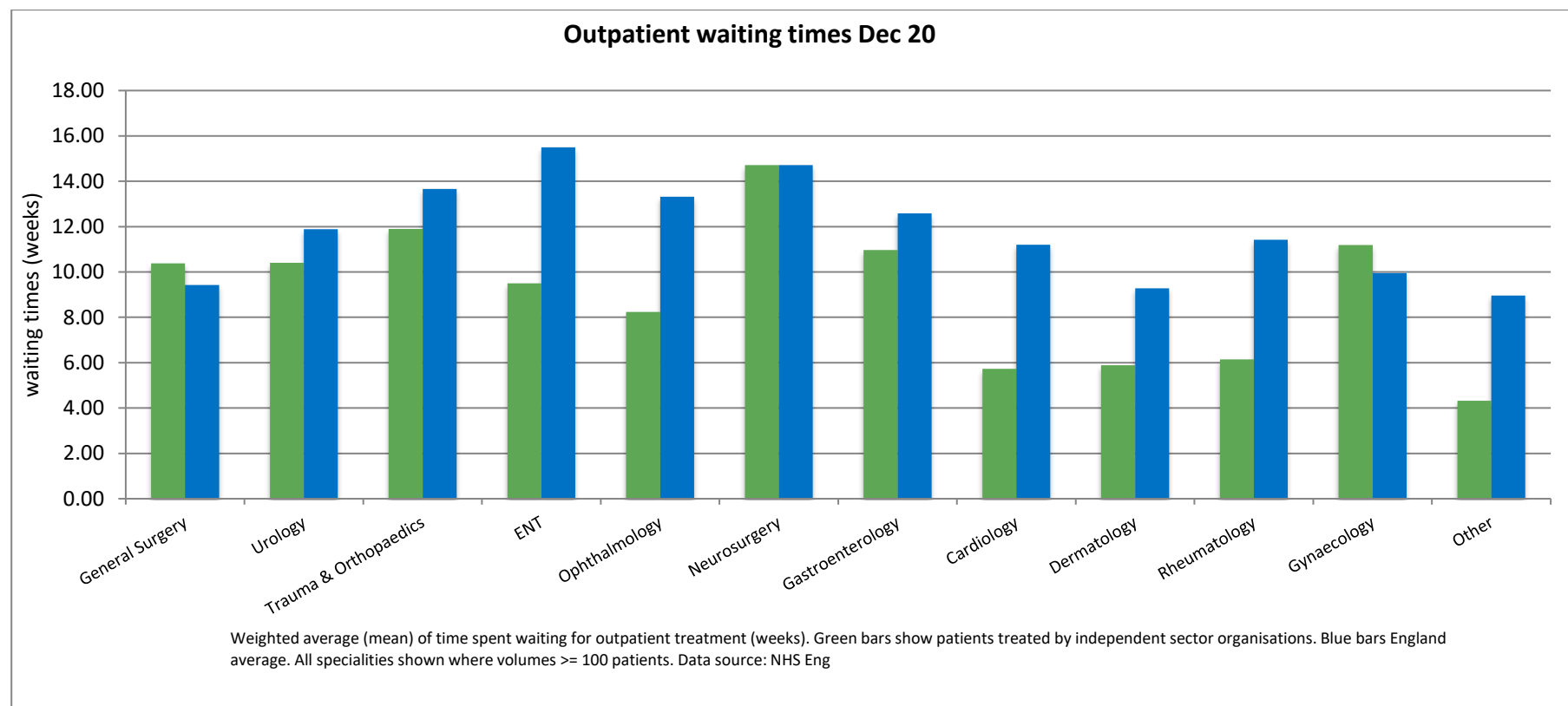
Lower is better. This dataset covers NHS patients treated by independent providers.

This graph shows total expected waiting time for inpatients before treatment begins.



Lower is better. This dataset covers NHS patients treated by independent providers.

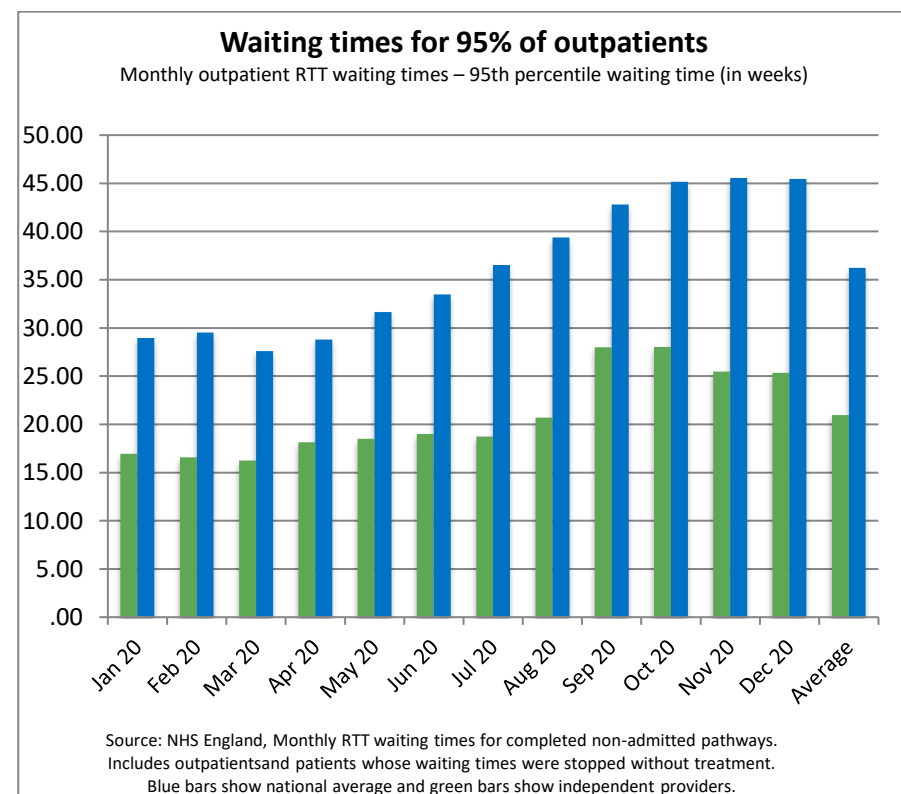
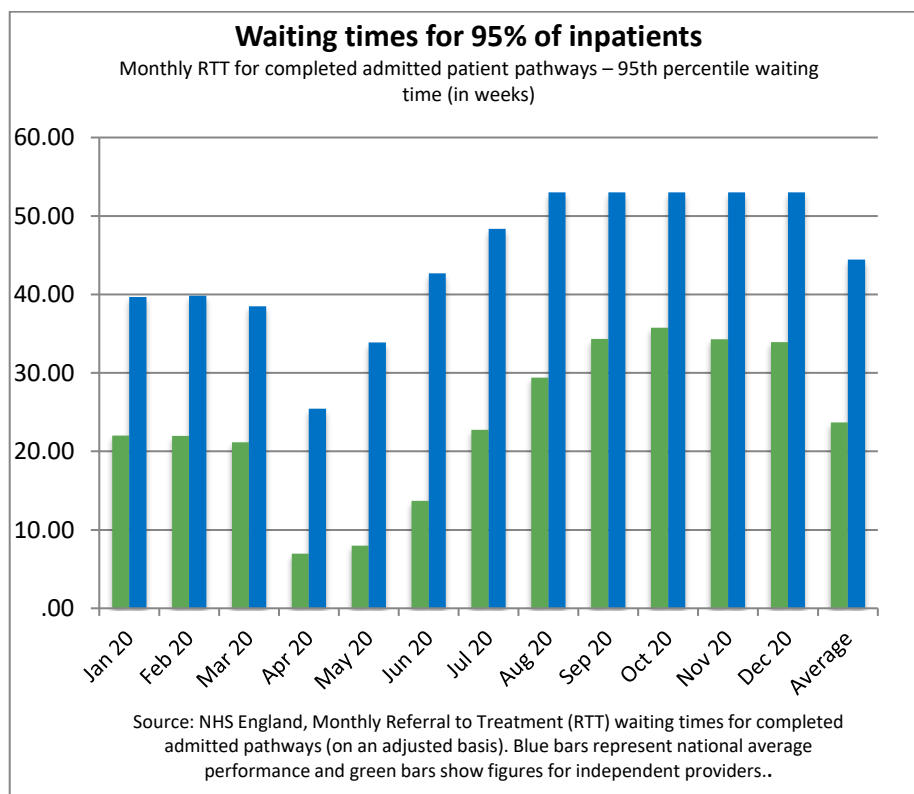
This graph shows typical how long outpatients typically wait before treatment.



Lower is better. This dataset covers NHS patients treated by independent providers.

Waiting times for most patients

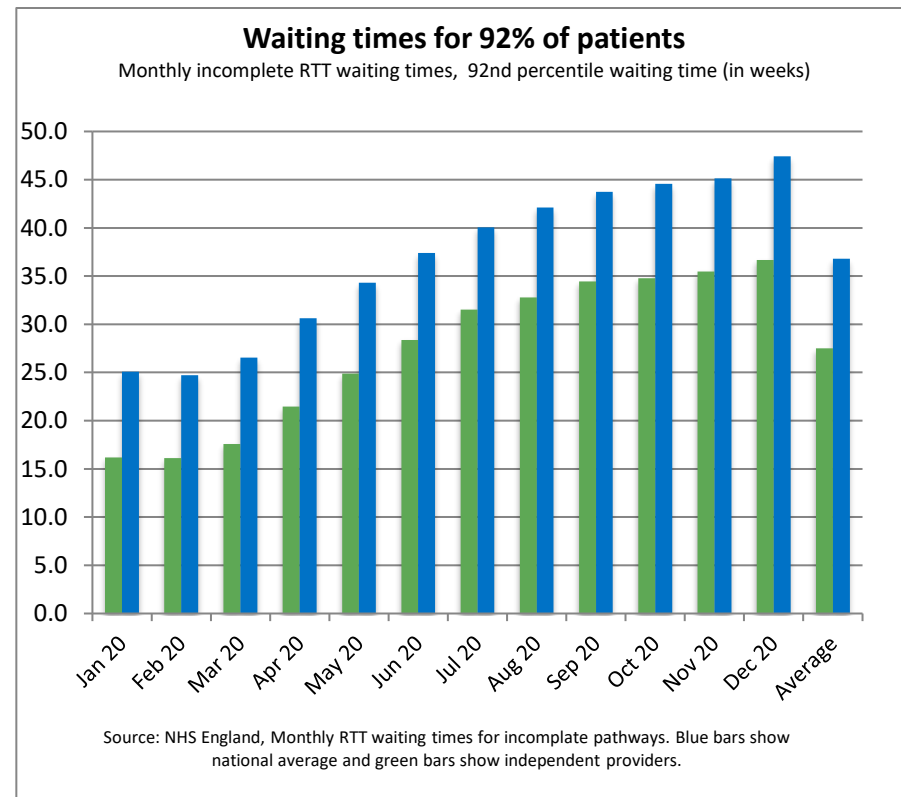
There will be a small number of patients for whom beginning treatment takes significantly longer than normal. The graphs below show the maximum waiting time for 95% of patients, i.e. the longest period that most patients can reasonably expect to have to wait. NB, since Aug 2020, the 95th percentile has exceeded 52+ weeks for inpatients treated at NHS organisations. Data is not published on how long patients wait beyond one year, so the graph below likely understates the waiting time for those patients.



Lower is better. This dataset covers NHS patients treated by independent providers.

The incomplete waiting time standard

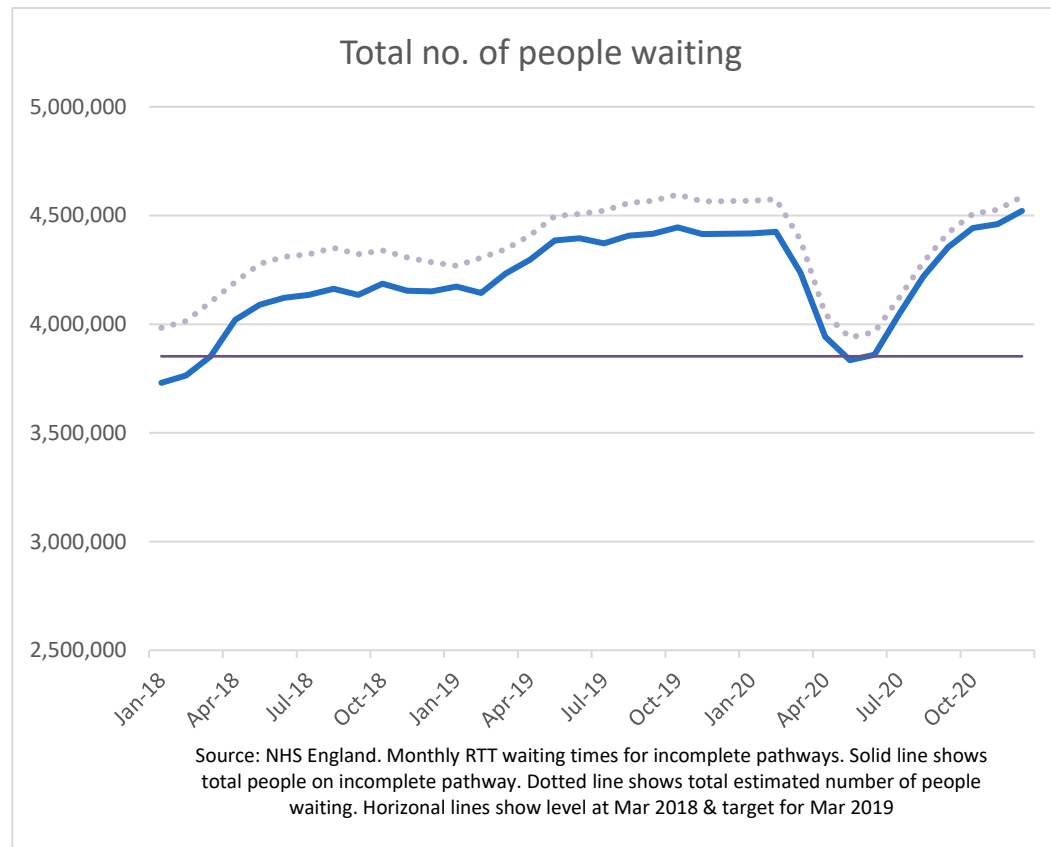
The graph below shows the length of time within which all but 8% of patients had begun their treatment at averaged across all NHS and independent providers respectively. The incomplete waiting time standard states that 92% of patients should begin treatment within 18 weeks.



Lower is better. This dataset covers NHS patients treated by independent providers.

Number of people waiting

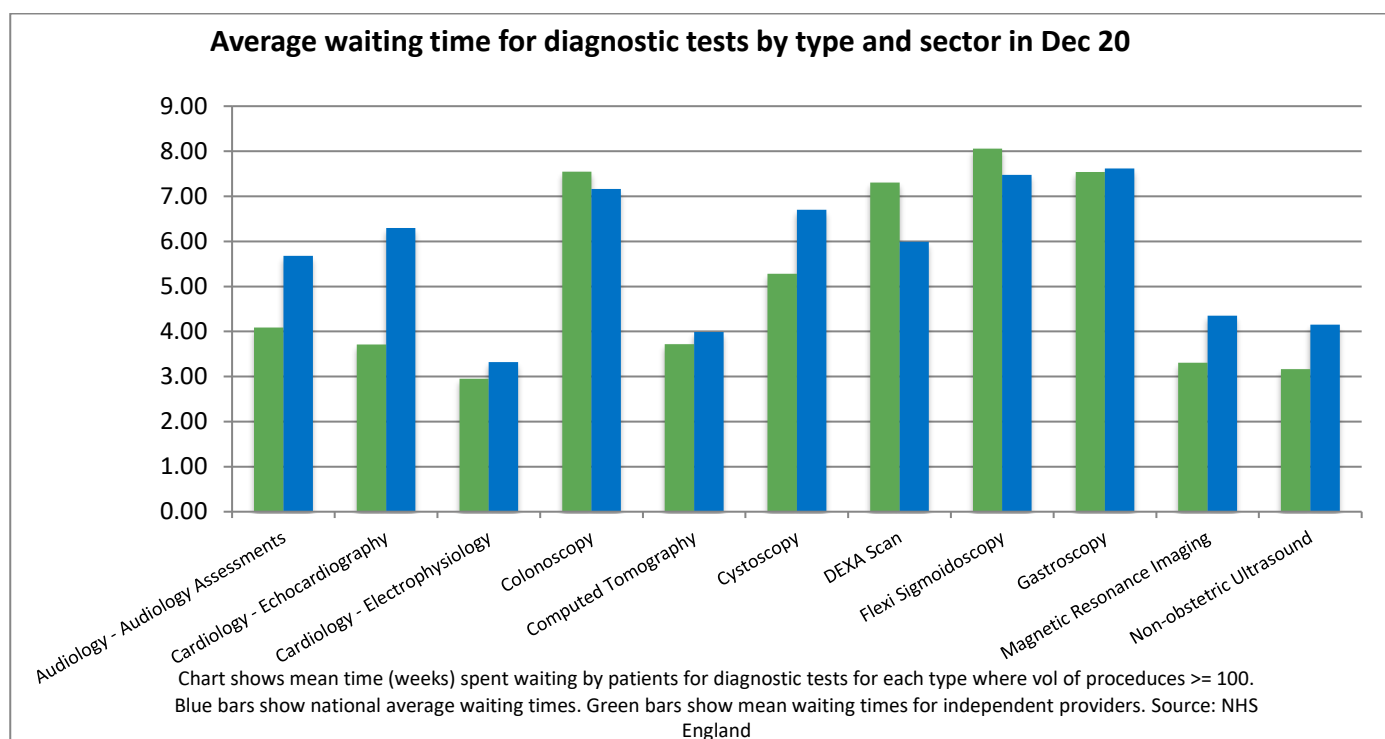
The graph below shows the total number of people waiting for NHS treatment. The dotted line shows the total estimated number of people waiting, including those at NHS trusts that do not publish their waiting data. The solid horizontal line is the target for the number of people waiting by March 2019. This was reiterated as an ongoing target in the planning guidance for 2019-20.



Lower is better. This dataset covers NHS patients treated by independent providers.

Diagnostic waiting times

The graph below shows mean waiting times for 15 key diagnostic tests. MRI scans and non-obstetric-ultrasound are the most frequently provided diagnostic tests by independent organisations. This dataset covers NHS patients only.



Lower is better. This dataset covers NHS patients treated by independent providers.

Source: <http://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/statistical-work-areas/diagnostics-waiting-times-and-activity>

NB see note in section on referral to treatment times about the calculation of mean waiting time values

Number of patients treated

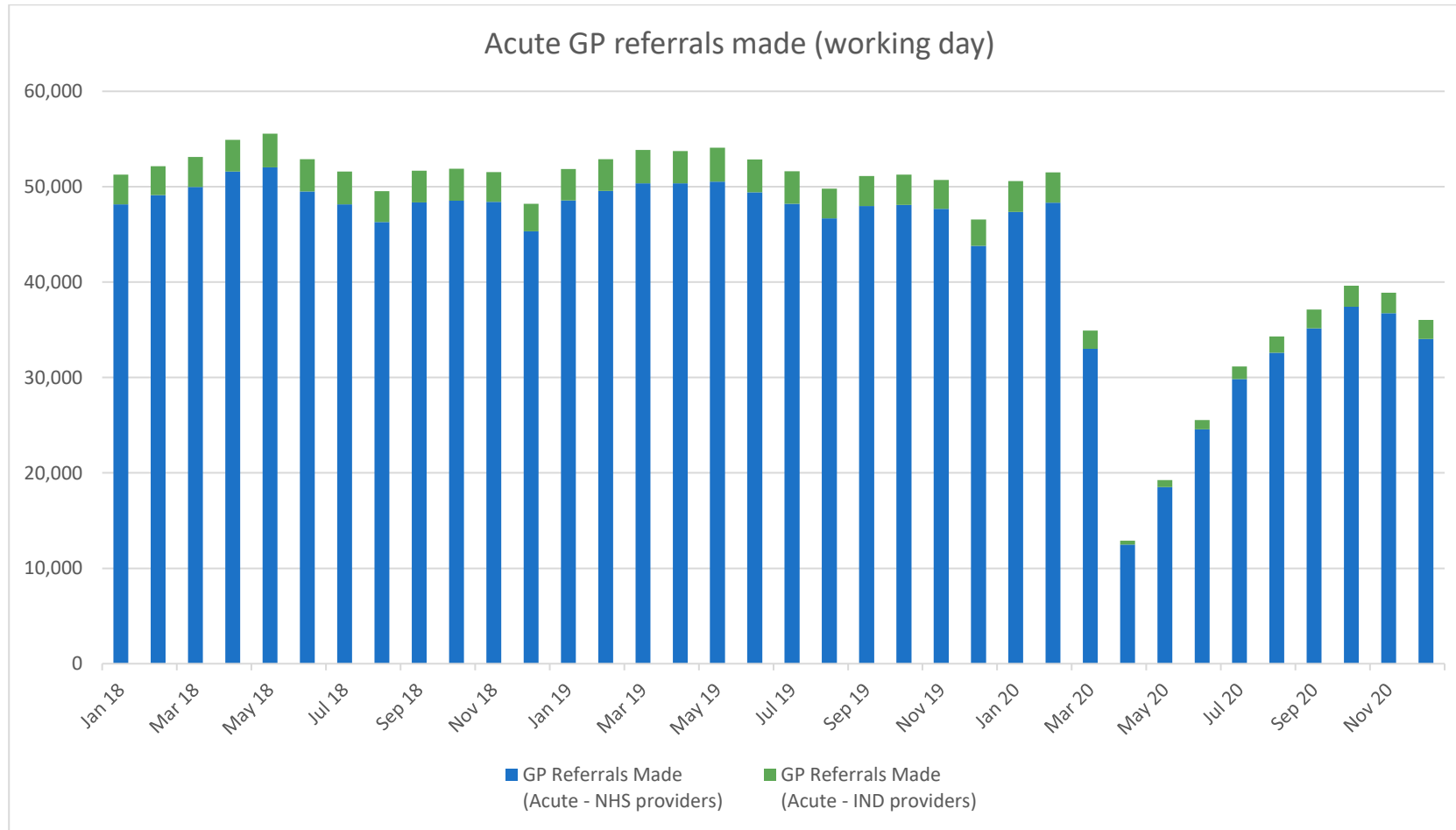
Number of patients referred to independent providers

As of August 2020, NHS England has discontinued its publications which track elective activity. It has also reduced the range of GP referral data available. The rationale for this decision is outlined [here](#). Accordingly, we have discontinued our tracking of elective activity and replaced this with analysis of the new monthly outpatient referrals dataset.

As well as NHS patients, many independent sector providers also treat large numbers of privately-funded patients as well. This dataset covers NHS patients only.

Acute elective referrals

The graph below shows the average number of patients referred to NHS and independent providers per working day over the past three years.
(<https://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/statistical-work-areas/outpatient-referrals/mrr-data/>).

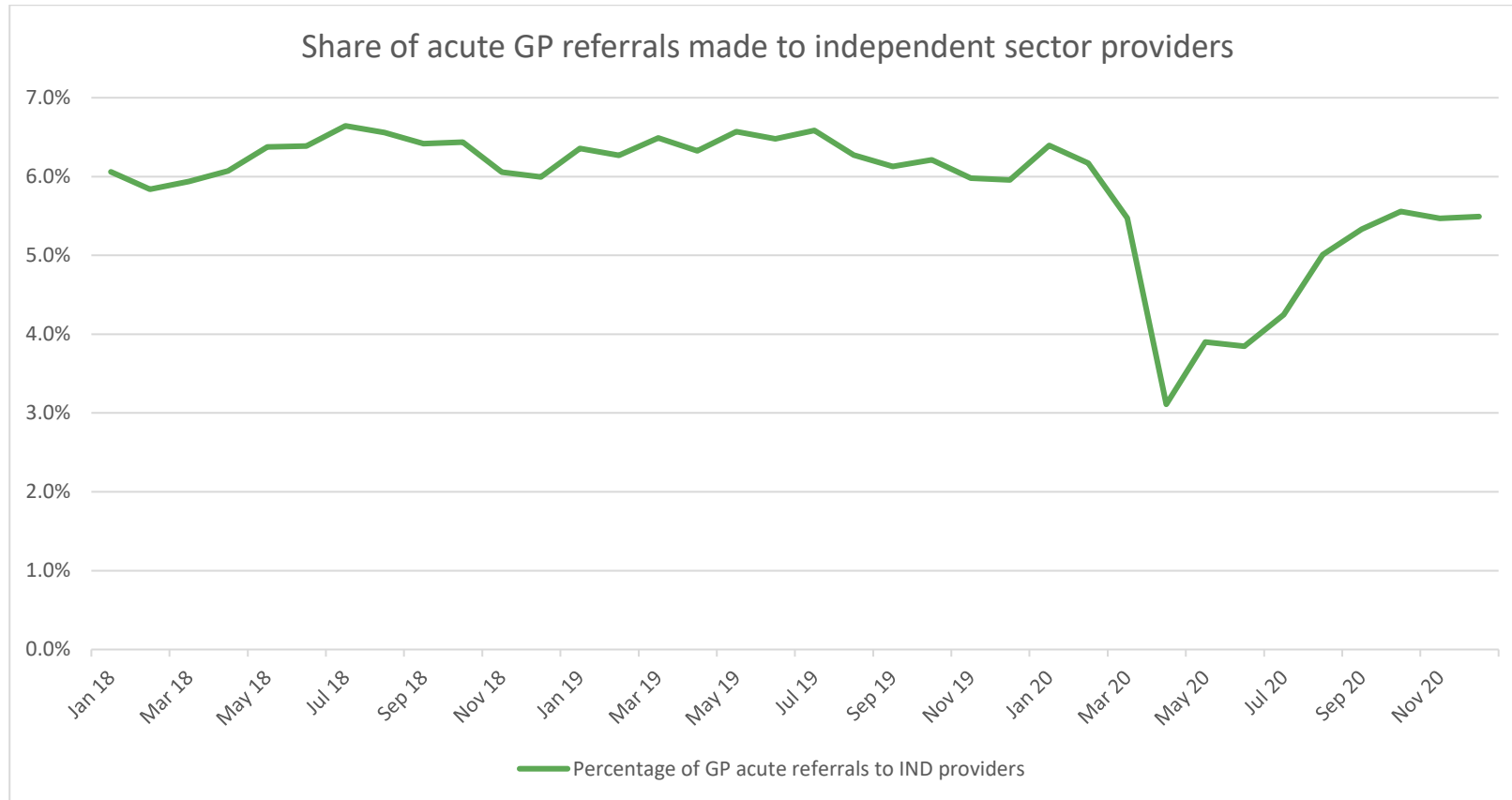


This dataset covers NHS patients treated by independent providers.

GP outpatient referrals – proportion treated by independent providers

The graph shows changes in the proportion of acute GP referrals to independent sector outpatients appointments over the past three years.

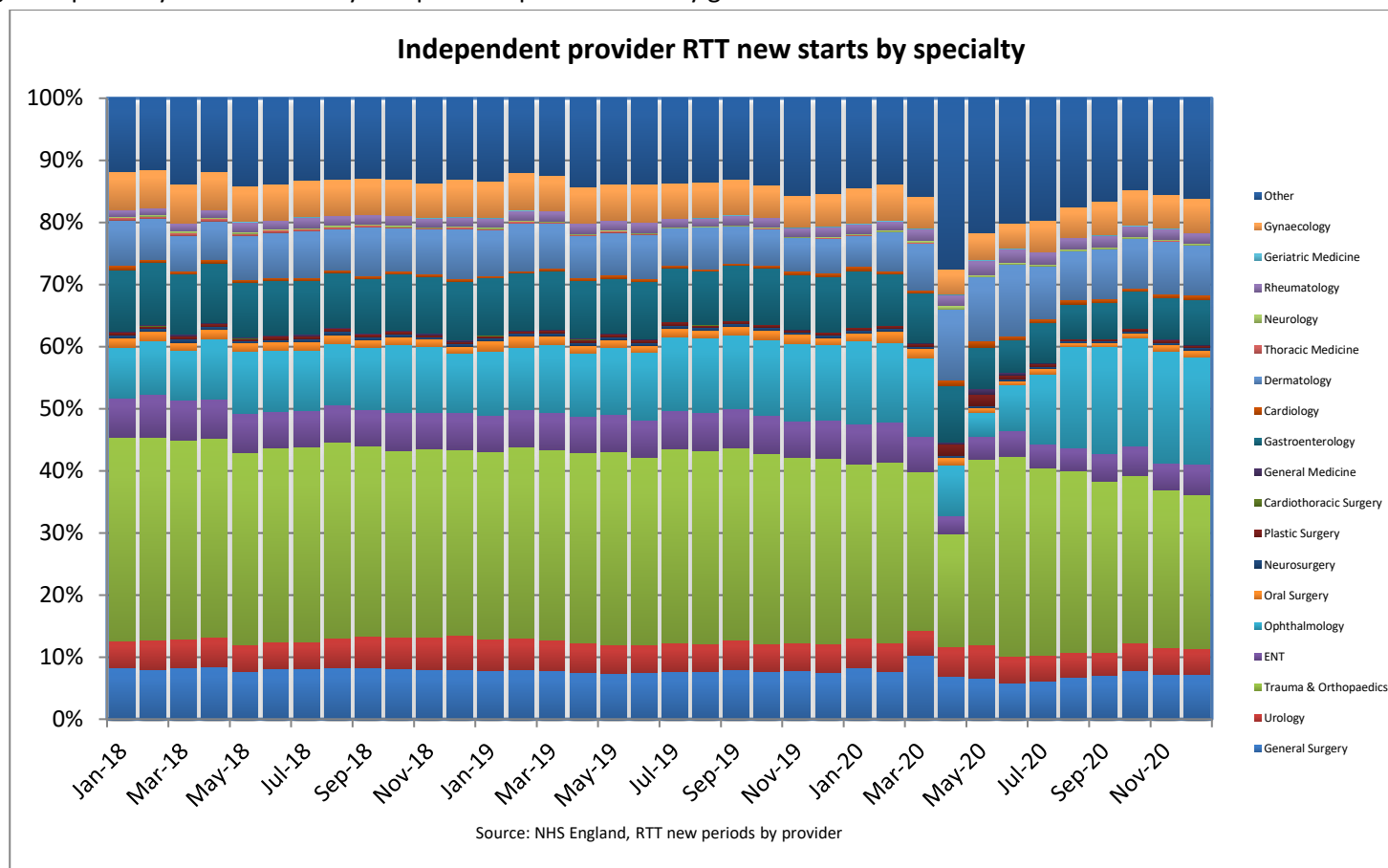
(<https://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/statistical-work-areas/outpatient-referrals/mrr-data/>)



This dataset covers NHS patients treated by independent providers.

Acute care specialties – mix of independent sector specialties on RTT pathway

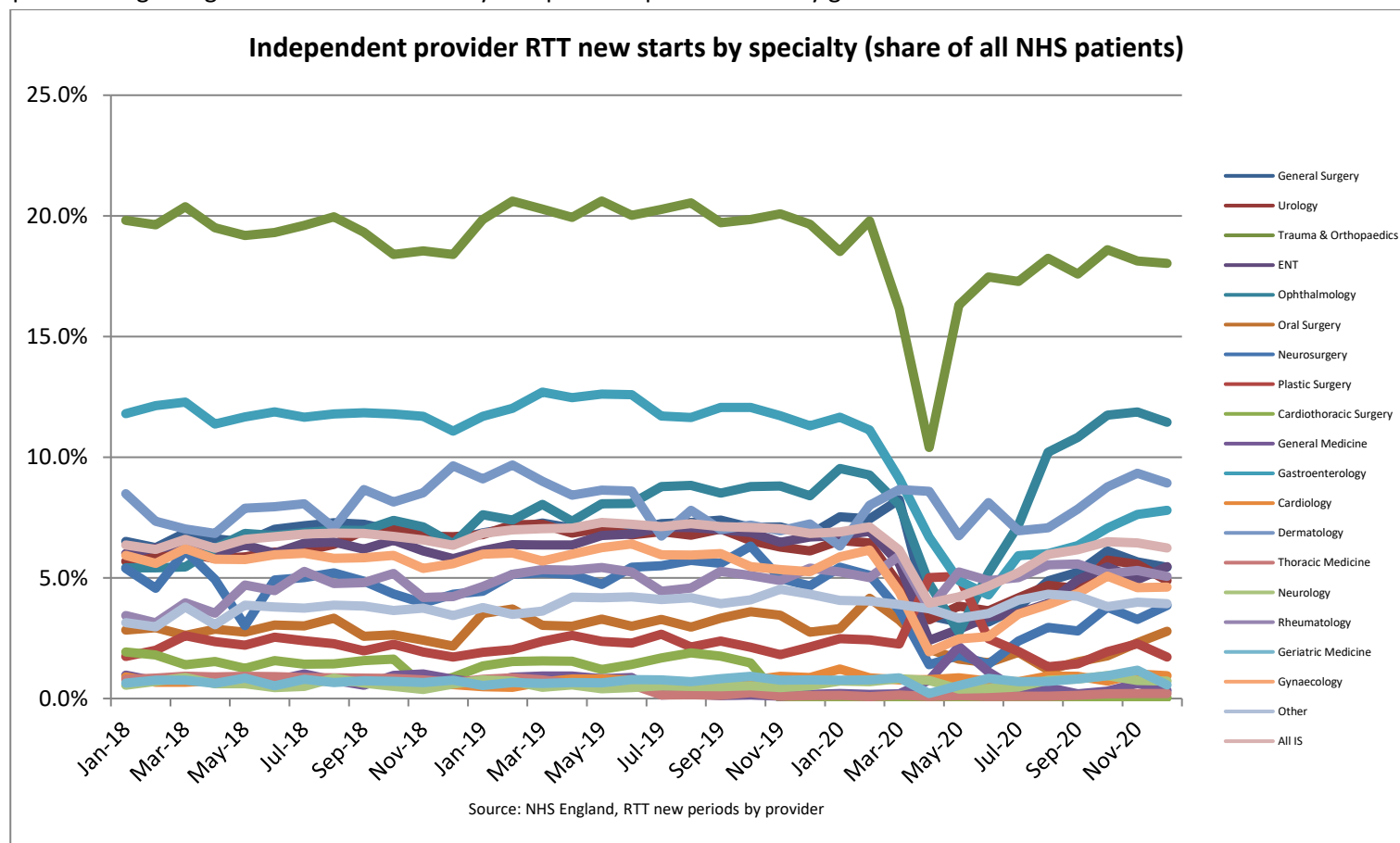
The graph below shows the different specialties of NHS patients beginning their referral-to-treatment pathways with independent providers over time. 100% equals all NHS patients beginning their pathway to be treated by independent providers in any given month.



This dataset covers NHS patients treated by independent providers.

Acute care specialties – share of all NHS patients on RTT pathway by specialty

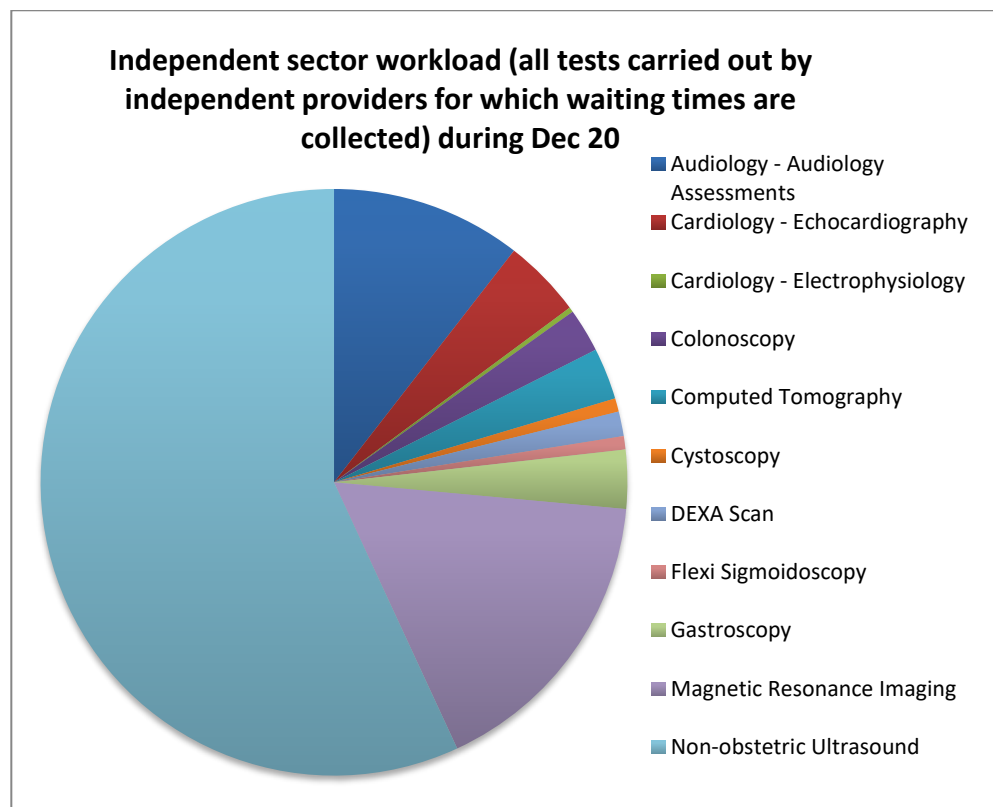
This graph also shows the different specialties of beginning their referral-to-treatment pathways with independent providers over time, but the percentages represent the proportion of all NHS patients beginning to wait for treatment by independent providers in any given month.



This dataset covers NHS patients treated by independent providers.

Diagnostic tests carried out by independent sector by modality

The pie chart below shows the distribution of key diagnostic tests provided by independent sector organisations for NHS patients (modality shown where ≥ 100 patients received tests).



This dataset covers NHS patients treated by independent providers.