

Produced by Sanofi

Skin in the *game*?

Post-pandemic disparities in dermatology

Sanofi seeks to partner with the health system to support improvements to the standard of care for dermatology patients. This heatmap looks at the differences in patients waiting to start treatment at the end of March 2023 across dermatology services in England, highlighting potential regional inequalities and areas for improvement in waiting times.

The average waiting time in weeks from referral to treatment for incomplete dermatology pathways, patients waiting to start treatment at the end of the month, in March 2023 has been used as an indicator for service pressures which may impact the care of dermatology patients^{1,2}. This data was collected through NHS England's Commissioner data^{1,2}, and is mapped against Integrated Care Board (ICB) footprints.

The England-wide average waiting time for dermatology referral to treatment is 16.3 weeks however, there are large levels of variation in waiting times between regions². For example, the Midlands (17.0 weeks), East of England (17.0 weeks), and North West (15.3 weeks) Commissioning Groups have the highest average waiting times in England. Norfolk and Waveney ICB have the highest average waiting times in all of England, at 23.3 weeks². It is clear there are regional inequalities that are impacting patients' ability to receive the care they need to improve their quality of life.

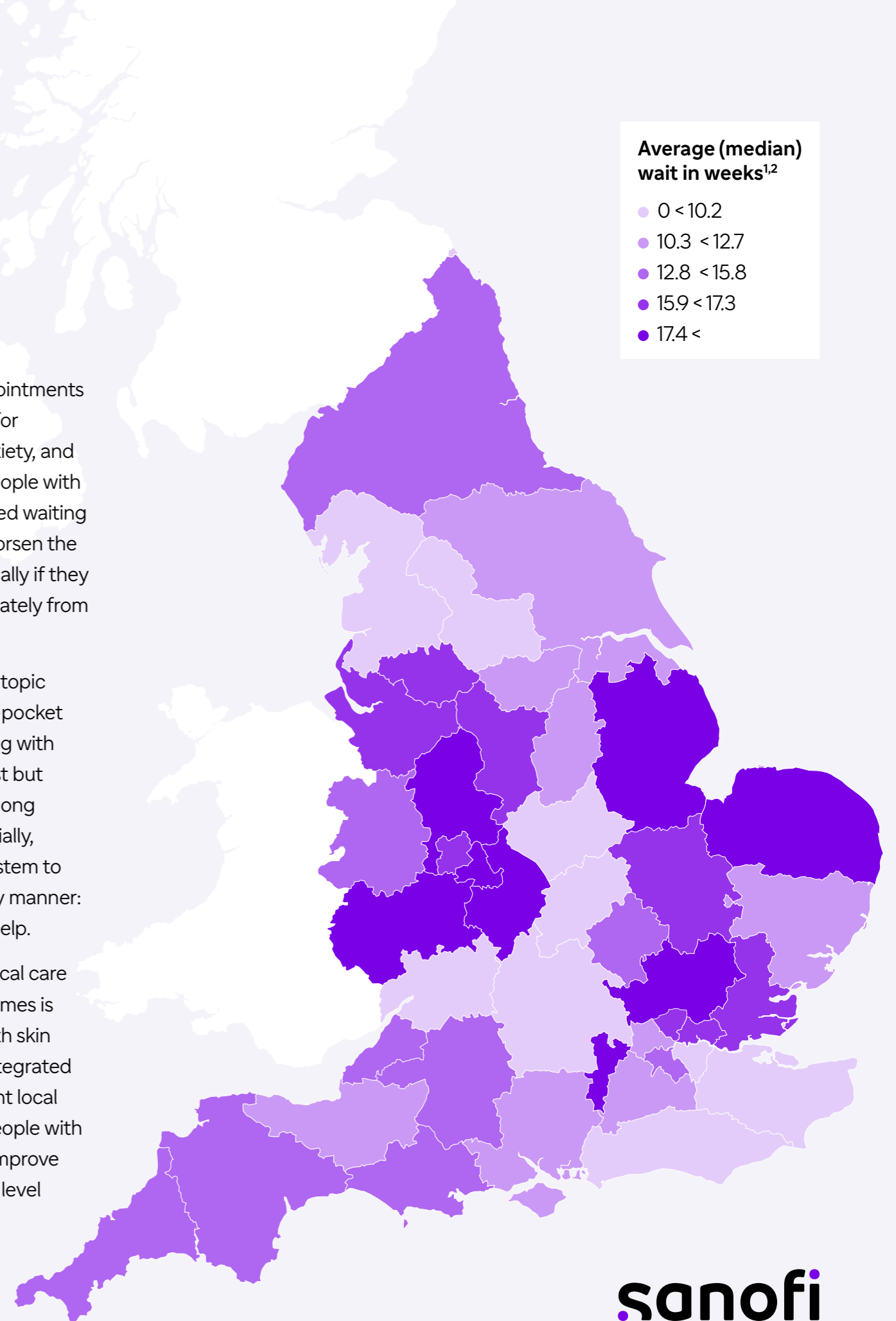
People who require specialist dermatology appointments usually have severe long-term skin conditions. For example, it has been found that depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation are more common amongst people with moderate-to-severe atopic dermatitis³. Increased waiting times may reduce patients' quality of life and worsen the psychological impacts of their condition, especially if they are not able to manage their condition appropriately from the very beginning.

People with long-term skin conditions such as atopic dermatitis spend on average far more in out-of-pocket costs to manage their condition than those living with other chronic diseases⁴, this is not a one-off cost but money they will have to spend managing a life-long condition. During the cost-of-living crisis especially, patients need to be supported by the health system to access the best evidence-based care in a timely manner: at Sanofi we want to explore how best we can help.

Clearly a plan to level up access to dermatological care and management in areas with longer waiting times is needed to improve the situation for patients with skin conditions. This should include ensuring that Integrated Care Systems are able to develop and implement local dermatology strategies, including to support people with long-term conditions like atopic dermatitis, to improve the patient pathway and ensure a standardised level of care across England.

Average (median) wait in weeks^{1,2}

- 0 < 10.2
- 10.3 < 12.7
- 12.8 < 15.8
- 15.9 < 17.3
- 17.4 <



1. NHS England, 2023, Consultant-led Referral to Treatment Waiting Times Data 2022-23, [Available online] <https://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/statistical-work-areas/rtt-waiting-times/rtt-data-2022-23/> 2. Sanofi Data on File REF-242490 3. Thyssen, J., Hamann, C., Linneberg, A., Dantoft, T., Skov, L., Gislason, G., Wu, J. and Egeberg, A., 2017. Atopic dermatitis is associated with anxiety, depression, and suicidal ideation, but not with psychiatric hospitalization or suicide. *Allergy*. 73(1), pp.214- 220. 4. Zink AGS, Arents B, Fink-Wagner A, Seitz IA, Mensing U, Wettemann N, de Carlo G, Ring J. Out-of-pocket Costs for Individuals with Atopic Eczema: A Cross-sectional Study in Nine European Countries. *Acta Derm Venereol*. 2019 Mar 1;99(3):263-267.