

Statistics Release



Department of
**Health, Social Services
and Public Safety**

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AN ROINN

**Sláinte, Seirbhísí Sóisialta
agus Sábháilteachta Poiblí**

MÄNNYSTRIE O

**Poustie, Resydënter Heisin
an Fowk Siccar**

06 November 2008

Northern Ireland Cancer Waiting Times – April, May and June 2008

This statistics release gives details of the waiting times for patients accessing cancer services at hospitals in Northern Ireland during the months of April, May and June 2008.

Data contained within this release reports on the performance of Health and Social Care Trusts in Northern Ireland, measured against the three Priorities for Action (PfA) targets for 2008/09, and relates to waiting times for cancer services in Northern Ireland during April, May and June 2008.

Waiting Times for a First Assessment with a Breast Cancer Specialist

Achievement of the 2008/2009 PfA target relating to waiting times for a first assessment with a Breast Cancer Specialist requires that ‘from April 2008, all urgent GP referrals for breast cancer (excluding those that have subsequently been reclassified as routine by a breast cancer specialist) and any routine referrals that have subsequently been reclassified as urgent by a breast cancer specialist, must wait no longer than 14 days for an appointment with a breast cancer specialist, with all urgent breast cancer referrals – both from GP’s and other practitioners – being seen within 14 days by March 2009’.

Table 1 reports the performance of all Health and Social Care Trusts in Northern Ireland towards this target for the months of April May and June 2008.

Table 1: Reporting on the 14 day waiting time target from referral to a first assessment with a breast cancer specialist in Health and Social Care Trusts in Northern Ireland¹

April - June 2008

	No. of patients first seen by a breast cancer specialist during the month following urgent referral for suspected cancer											
	No. that waited 14 days or less			No. that waited > 14 days			Total			Percentage		
	April	May	June	April	May	June	April	May	June	April	May	June
Belfast	222	221	205	0	0	18	222	221	223	100.0%	100.0%	91.9%
Northern	126	126	88	0	0	0	126	126	88	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Southern	174	113	130	0	0	0	174	113	130	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
South Eastern	75	93	84	0	0	1	75	93	85	100.0%	100.0%	98.8%
Western	106	102	79	0	0	0	106	102	79	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Northern Ireland	703	655	586	0	0	19	703	655	605	100.0%	100.0%	96.9%

Source: Departmental Return SDR2

¹Refer to Technical Notes – points 1-4.

Waiting Times for Treatment

Achievement of the 2008/2009 PfA target relating to waiting times for treatment following a decision to treat requires that ‘from April 2008, for all patients that received their first definitive treatment for cancer, at least 98% will have waited no longer than 31 days from the date on which the decision to treat was taken to the date of first definitive treatment’.

Table 2 reports the performance of Health and Social Care Trusts in Northern Ireland towards this target for the months of April, May and June 2008.

Table 2: Reporting on the 31 day target from decision to treat to treatment for all cancers in Health and Social Care Trusts in Northern Ireland²

April - June 2008

	No. of patients first treated for Cancer											
	Treated within 31 days of a decision to treat being taken			Treated > 31 days from decision to treat being taken			Total			Percentage		
	April	May	June	April	May	June	April	May	June	April	May	June
Belfast	261	222	277	23	16	9	284	238	286	91.9%	93.3%	96.9%
Northern	88	95	98	8	1	0	96	96	98	91.7%	99.0%	100.0%
Southern	73	73	87	2	2	0	75	75	87	97.3%	97.3%	100.0%
South Eastern	98	96	83	2	1	0	100	97	83	98.0%	99.0%	100.0%
Western	94	65	66	9	1	3	103	66	69	91.3%	98.5%	95.7%
Northern Ireland	614	551	611	44	21	12	658	572	623	93.3%	96.3%	98.1%

Source: Northern Ireland Cancer Waiting Times Dataset

²Refer to Technical Notes – points 1 & 5-6.

Waiting Times for Treatment following a GP referral for Suspect Cancer

Achievement of the 2008/2009 Priorities for Action Target relating to waiting times for treatment following an urgent GP referral for suspect cancer requires that 'from April 2008, for all patients that received their first definitive treatment for cancer following an urgent referral by a GP for suspected cancer (including any routine referrals that were subsequently reclassified as urgent by a cancer specialist), at least 75% will have waited no longer than 62 days from the date of their initial GP referral to the first definitive treatment, increasing to 95% during March 2009'.

Table 3 reports the performance of Health and Social Care Trusts in Northern Ireland towards this target for the months of April, May and June 2008.

Table 3: Reporting on the 62 day waiting time target from an urgent GP referral for suspect cancer to treatment, for all cancers in Health and Social Care Trusts in Northern Ireland³

April - June 2008												
	No. of patients first treated for Cancer following an urgent GP referral for Suspected Cancer											
	Treated within 62 days from receipt of Referral			Treated > 62 days from receipt of Referral			Total			Percentage		
	April	May	June	April	May	June	April	May	June	April	May	June
Belfast	36	42.5	55.5	8	7	6.5	44	49.5	62	81.8%	85.9%	89.5%
Northern	41.5	41	50	8	8	6	49.5	49	56	83.8%	83.7%	89.3%
Southern	16.5	23	35	1	0.5	0	17.5	23.5	35	94.3%	97.9%	100.0%
South Eastern	34.5	27.5	36	6	2.5	1	40.5	30	37	85.2%	91.7%	97.3%
Western	28.5	17	15.5	8	5	2.5	36.5	22	18	78.1%	77.3%	86.1%
Northern Ireland	157	151	192	31	23	16	188	174	208	83.5%	86.8%	92.3%

Source: Northern Ireland Cancer Waiting Times Dataset

³Refer to Technical Notes – points 1 & 7-9.

Technical Notes

1. The sources of data contained in this bulletin are the Departmental Return SDR 2 (Table 1) and the Northern Ireland Cancer Waiting Times Dataset (Tables 2 and 3).
2. Data contained in Table 1 relates to all urgent referrals (excluding those that have been reclassified as routine by the breast specialist) for suspect breast cancer, and routine referrals that have subsequently been reclassified as urgent by a breast specialist. Figures also include all patients living outside Northern Ireland and all privately funded patients waiting for treatment in Health and Social Care hospitals.
3. The completed waiting time in Table 1 is measured from the date an initial breast cancer referral is first received by the Provider HSC Trust, and ends on the date that the patient had attended their first outpatient appointment with a breast cancer specialist. Adjustments are made to the completed waiting time in the event of a patient cancelling or failing to attend a first outpatient appointment.
4. Figures provided in Table 1 reflect all urgent referrals for breast cancer both from GP's and other practitioners. The 2008/09 target states that from April 2008, all urgent GP referrals for breast cancer are seen within 14 days of referral, with all urgent breast cancer referrals – both from GP's and other practitioners – being seen within 14 days by March 2009.
5. Data contained in Table 2 relates to patients who received a first definitive treatment for cancer (having been given an 'International Classification of Diseases 10' diagnosis) during the months of April, May and June 2008, irrespective of their source of referral. Data include treatment for all cancers, with the exception of basal cell carcinoma. Figures also include all patients living outside Northern Ireland and all privately funded patients waiting for treatment in Health and Social Care hospitals. Patients that have not been given an ICD 10 diagnosis are excluded.
6. The completed waiting time in Table 2 is measured from the date a decision was taken to treat a patient for cancer and ends on the date that the patient received their first definitive treatment for cancer. Adjustments are made to the completed waiting time in the event of a patient cancelling or self deferring treatment or as a result of suspension for either medical or social reasons.
7. Data contained in Table 3 relates to all patients who received a first definitive treatment for cancer (having been given an ICD 10 diagnosis) during the months of April, May and June 2008, following an urgent referral for suspect cancer from a General Practitioner, and routine GP referrals that have subsequently been reclassified as urgent by a cancer specialist. Data relate to urgent GP referrals for all cancers with the exception of basal cell carcinoma. Figures also include all patients living outside Northern Ireland and all privately funded patients waiting for treatment in Health and Social Care hospitals. Referrals from sources other than a GP, routine referrals from a GP and patients who have not been given an ICD 10 diagnosis are excluded.
8. The completed waiting time in Table 3 is measured from the date an initial urgent referral for suspect cancer from a GP is received by the Provider Health and Social Care Trust and ends on the date the patient received their first definitive treatment for cancer. Adjustments are made to the completed waiting time in the event of a patient cancelling or self deferring treatment or as a result of suspension for either medical or social reasons.
9. The measurement of a patient's waiting time in Table 3, from initial urgent GP referral to first definitive treatment, includes cases in which a patient was initially referred to a particular Health and Social Care Trust for consultant assessment but was then subsequently transferred to another Health and Social Care Trust for treatment. In such cases, the responsibility for reporting that patient is shared, with 0.5 allocated to the Trust where the patient was first seen for assessment and

0.5 to the Trust of first treatment. For example, if a patient is initially referred for assessment in the South Eastern HSC Trust and is then transferred to the Belfast HSC Trust where they receive treatment 50 days after their initial GP referral, both the South Eastern and Belfast HSC Trusts will report 0.5 of a patient waiting less than 62 days. Similarly, if such a patient waited over 62 days for treatment, both the Trust where the patient was first seen and the Trust where the patient was treated would report 0.5 of a patient waiting more than 62 days.

10. Information on waiting times for the months of July, August and September 2008 will be published on 05 February 2009.

11. Data contained within this publication are not governed by National Statistics.

Additional Information

Further information on waiting lists in Northern Ireland is available from:

Office Information Manager
Hospital Information Branch
Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety
Annexe 2
Castle Buildings
Stormont
BT4 3SQ

E-mail: statistics@dhsspsni.gov.uk

Internet address: http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/stats_research/waiting_times.htm