

# 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**

07 May 2009

## Northern Ireland Cancer Waiting Times – October, November and December 2008

This statistics release gives details of the waiting times for patients accessing cancer services at hospitals in Northern Ireland during the months of October, November and December 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 October, November and December 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 on the performance of all Health and Social Care Trusts in Northern Ireland towards the target for all urgent GP referrals for the months of October, November and December 2008.

**Table 1: Reporting on the 14 day waiting time target from GP referral to a first assessment with a breast cancer specialist in Health and Social Care Trusts in Northern Ireland<sup>1</sup>**

October – December 2008

	No. of patients first seen by a breast cancer specialist during the month following urgent GP referral for suspected cancer											
	No. that waited 14 days or less			No. that waited > 14 days			Total			Percentage (%)		
	Oct	Nov	Dec	Oct	Nov	Dec	Oct	Nov	Dec	Oct	Nov	Dec
Belfast	221	206	195	0	0	0	221	206	195	100.0	100.0	100.0
Northern	70	55	60	0	0	0	70	55	60	100.0	100.0	100.0
Southern	175	140	109	0	0	0	175	140	109	100.0	100.0	100.0
South Eastern	133	133	76	0	0	0	133	133	76	100.0	100.0	100.0
Western	124	108	88	0	0	0	124	108	88	100.0	100.0	100.0
<b>Northern Ireland</b>	<b>723</b>	<b>642</b>	<b>528</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>723</b>	<b>642</b>	<b>528</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Departmental Return SDR2

<sup>1</sup>Refer to Technical Notes – points 1,2,4 and 5.

Table 2 reports on the performance of all Health and Social Care Trusts in Northern Ireland towards the target for all urgent referrals for the months of October, November and December 2008.

**Table 2: 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 Ireland<sup>2</sup>**

**October – December 2008**

	<b>No. of patients first seen by a breast cancer specialist during the month following all urgent referrals for suspected cancer</b>											
	<b>No. that waited 14 days or less</b>			<b>No. that waited &gt; 14 days</b>			<b>Total</b>			<b>Percentage (%)</b>		
	<b>Oct</b>	<b>Nov</b>	<b>Dec</b>	<b>Oct</b>	<b>Nov</b>	<b>Dec</b>	<b>Oct</b>	<b>Nov</b>	<b>Dec</b>	<b>Oct</b>	<b>Nov</b>	<b>Dec</b>
Belfast	251	239	245	0	0	0	251	239	245	100.0	100.0	100.0
Northern	87	78	83	0	0	0	87	78	83	100.0	100.0	100.0
Southern	182	142	112	0	0	0	182	142	112	100.0	100.0	100.0
South Eastern	151	151	92	0	0	0	151	151	92	100.0	100.0	100.0
Western	127	113	96	0	0	0	127	113	96	100.0	100.0	100.0
<b>Northern Ireland</b>	<b>798</b>	<b>723</b>	<b>628</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>798</b>	<b>723</b>	<b>628</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Departmental Return SDR2

<sup>2</sup>Refer to Technical Notes – points 1,3,4 and 5.

## 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 3 reports the performance of Health and Social Care Trusts in Northern Ireland towards this target for the months of October, November and December 2008.

**Table 3: Reporting on the 31 day target from decision to treat to treatment for all cancers in Health and Social Care Trusts in Northern Ireland<sup>3</sup>**

October - December 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 (%)		
	Oct	Nov	Dec	Oct	Nov	Dec	Oct	Nov	Dec	Oct	Nov	Dec
Belfast	198	237	258	7	10	8	205	247	266	96.6	96.0	97.0
Northern	86	74	73	0	0	0	86	74	73	100.0	100.0	100.0
Southern	74	78	64	1	0	1	75	78	65	98.7	100.0	98.5
South Eastern	66	74	96	0	0	2	66	74	98	100.0	100.0	98.0
Western	88	69	72	0	1	0	88	70	72	100.0	98.6	100.0
<b>Northern Ireland</b>	<b>512</b>	<b>532</b>	<b>563</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>520</b>	<b>543</b>	<b>574</b>	<b>98.5</b>	<b>98.0</b>	<b>98.1</b>

Source: Northern Ireland Cancer Waiting Times Dataset & Cancer Patient Pathway System (CaPPS)

<sup>3</sup>Refer to Technical Notes – points 1,6,7 and 8.

## Waiting Times for Treatment following an Urgent 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 4 reports the performance of Health and Social Care Trusts in Northern Ireland towards this target for the months of October, November and December 2008.

**Table 4: 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 Ireland<sup>4</sup>**

October - December 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 (%)		
	Oct	Nov	Dec	Oct	Nov	Dec	Oct	Nov	Dec	Oct	Nov	Dec
Belfast	41.5	53.0	60.5	8.0	6.5	6.5	49.5	59.5	67.0	83.8	89.1	90.3
Northern	42.5	33.5	27.5	6.0	2.5	2.5	48.5	36.0	30.0	87.6	93.1	91.7
Southern	22.0	21.5	28.5	0.5	0.0	1.0	22.5	21.5	29.5	97.8	100.0	96.6
South Eastern	20.0	28.0	22.0	0.5	2.0	3.0	20.5	30.0	25.0	97.6	93.3	88.0
Western	30.0	17.0	24.5	7.0	3.0	0.0	37.0	20.0	24.5	81.1	85.0	100.0
<b>Northern Ireland</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>163</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>178</b>	<b>167</b>	<b>176</b>	<b>87.6</b>	<b>91.6</b>	<b>92.6</b>

Source: Northern Ireland Cancer Waiting Times Dataset & Cancer Patient Pathway System (CaPPS)

<sup>4</sup>Refer to Technical Notes – points 1,6,9,10 and 11.

## Technical Notes

1. The sources of data contained in this bulletin are the Departmental Return SDR 2 (Tables 1 and 2), the Northern Ireland Cancer Waiting Times Dataset (Tables 3 and 4) and the Cancer Patient Pathway System (CaPPS) (Tables 3 and 4).
2. Data contained in Table 1 relates to all urgent GP referrals (excluding those that have been reclassified as routine by the breast specialist) for suspect breast cancer, and routine GP 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. Referrals from sources other than a GP, and routine GP referrals (except for those reclassified as urgent) are excluded.
3. Data contained in Table 2 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.
4. The completed waiting time in Tables 1 and 2 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.
5. Figures provided in Table 1 reflect all urgent referrals for breast cancer from GP's. Figures provided in Table 2 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.
6. The Cancer Patient Pathway System (CaPPS) was introduced on 20 September 2008 as a replacement for the Northern Ireland Cancer Waiting Times database. The CaPPS system collects information on patients treated for cancer as required to monitor the 31 and 62 day cancer targets. Consequently, there are two different data sources for patients treated in the month of October, November and December, namely the Northern Ireland Cancer Waiting Times Dataset and CaPPS.
7. Data contained in Table 3 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 October, November and December 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.
8. The completed waiting time in Table 3 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.
9. Data contained in Table 4 relates to all patients who received a first definitive treatment for cancer (having been given an ICD 10 diagnosis) during the months of October, November and December 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.

10. The completed waiting time in Table 4 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.
11. The measurement of a patient's waiting time in Table 4, 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.
12. Information on waiting times for the months of January, February and March 2009 will be published on 26 June 2009.
13. Data contained within this publication are Official 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](mailto:statistics@dhsspsni.gov.uk)

Internet address: [http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/stats\\_research/stats-activity\\_stats-2/waiting\\_times.htm](http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/stats_research/stats-activity_stats-2/waiting_times.htm)