

INFORMATION  
ANALYSIS  
DIRECTORATE



# Northern Ireland Waiting Time Statistics: Cancer Waiting Times (April - June 2017)



# READER INFORMATION

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<b>Purpose:</b>	<p>This publication presents information on waiting times for cancer services at hospitals in Northern Ireland during April, May and June 2017 and reports on the performance of Health and Social Care (HSC) Trusts in Northern Ireland, against the draft 2017/18 Ministerial Target for cancer care services, which states that:</p> <p><i>“From April 2017, all urgent breast cancer referrals should be seen within 14 days; at least 98% of patients diagnosed with cancer should receive their first definitive treatment within 31 days of a decision to treat; and at least 95% of patients urgently referred with a suspected cancer should begin their first definitive treatment within 62 days.”</i></p> <p>All data are presented by Health and Social Care Trust and, where applicable, by tumour site.</p>
<b>Statistical Quality</b>	<p>The ‘Cancer Waiting Times Publication – Supporting Documentation’ booklet details the technical guidance, definitions, as well as notes on how to use the data contained within this statistical release. This booklet is available to view or download from the following link: <a href="https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/articles/cancer-waiting-times">https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/articles/cancer-waiting-times</a></p>
<b>Internet address</b>	<a href="https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/topics/doh-statistics-and-research">https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/topics/doh-statistics-and-research</a>
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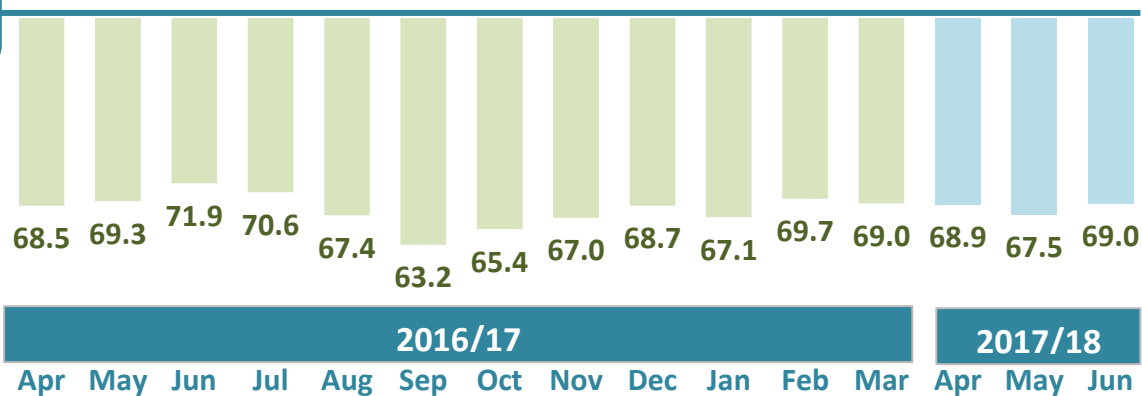
## 62 Day Ministerial Target

At least 95% of patients should begin their first treatment for cancer within 62 days following an urgent GP referral for suspect cancer.

In June 2017, 387 patients commenced their first treatment for cancer following an urgent GP referral for suspect cancer, compared with 394 in May 2017, and 385 in June 2016 (Table 3).

**95%  
TARGET**

% of patients commencing treatment for cancer within 62 days

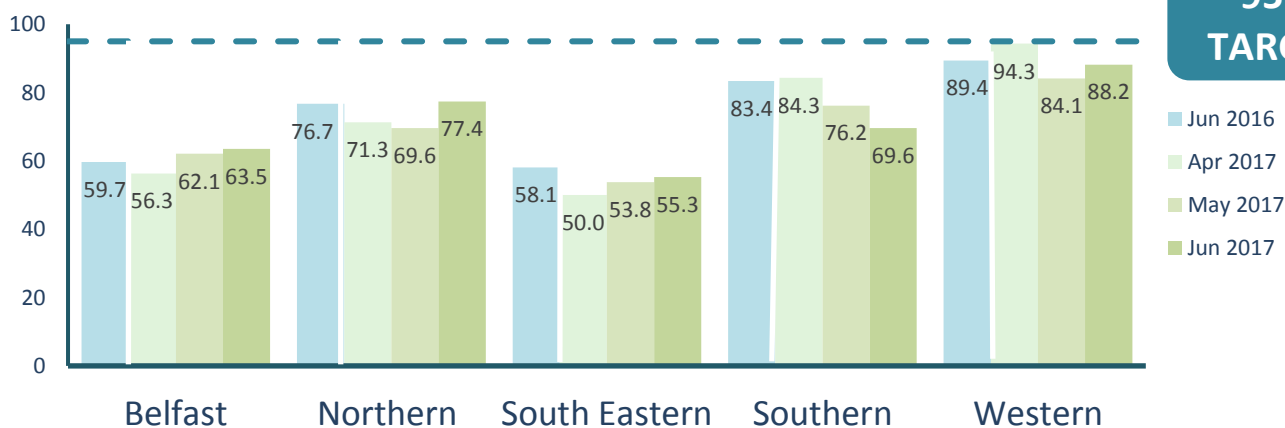


The Ministerial target was not met.

In June 2017, 69.0% of patients commenced their first treatment for cancer within 62 days of an urgent GP referral for suspect cancer, compared with 67.5% in May 2017 and 71.9% during June 2016 (Table 3).

### Trust Performance

% of patients commencing treatment for cancer within 62 days

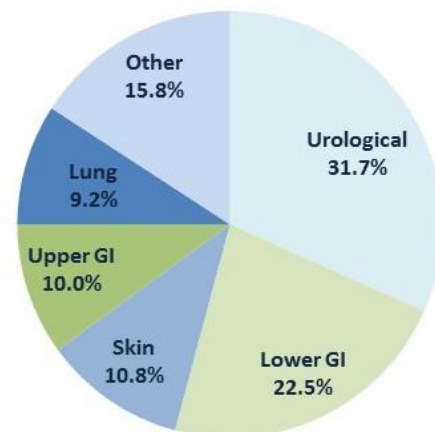


All HSC Trusts failed to meet the 62 day component of the Ministerial target during June 2017 (Table 1).

### Waits over 62 Days by Tumour Site

Of the 120 patients waiting longer than 62 days for treatment in June 2017, almost one third (38, 31.7%) were diagnosed with urological cancer. (Table 2).

% patients waiting over 62 days by tumour site

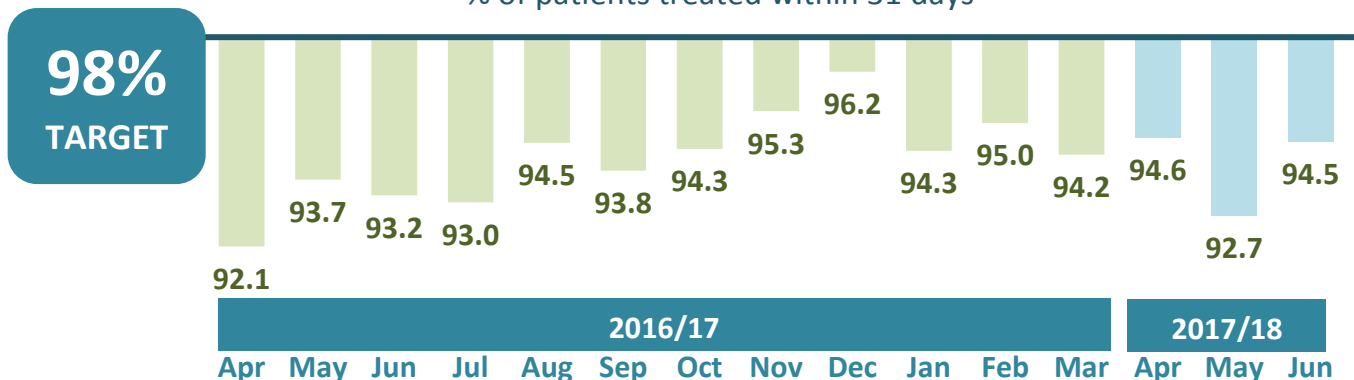


## 31 Day Ministerial Target

At least 98% of patients diagnosed with cancer should receive their first definitive treatment within 31 days of a decision to treat.

In June 2017, 874 patients commenced their first treatment for cancer following a decision to treat, compared with 849 in May 2017 and 857 during June 2016. (Table 6).

% of patients treated within 31 days

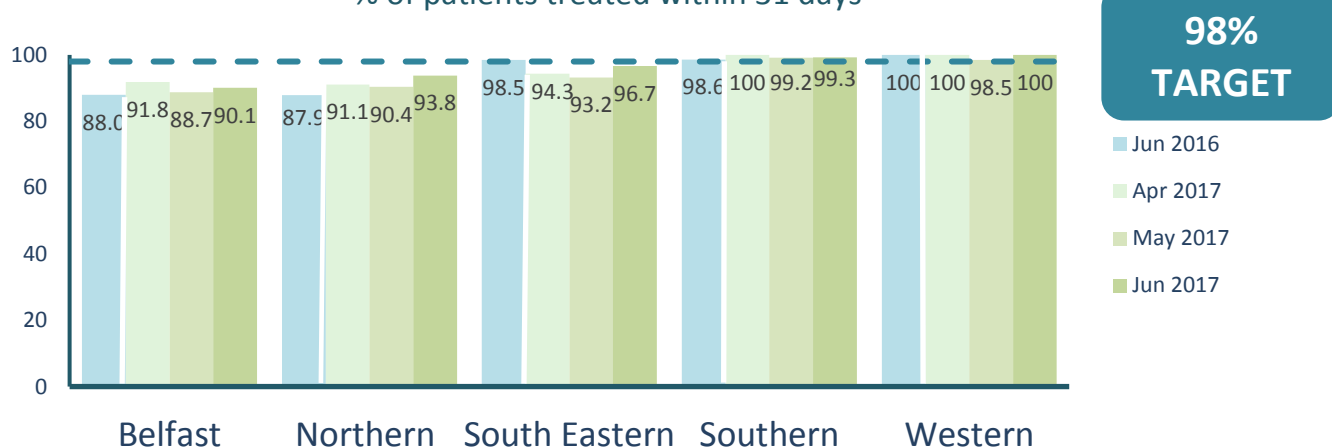


The Ministerial target was not met.

In June 2017, 94.5% of patients were treated within 31 days compared with 92.7% in May 2017 and 93.2% during June 2016 (Table 6).

## Trust Performance

% of patients treated within 31 days

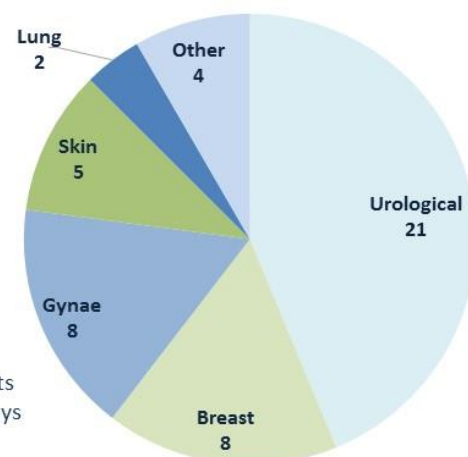


During June 2017, the Southern and Western HSC Trusts achieved the 98% Ministerial target, with Western having all patients treated within 31 days following a decision to treat. The Belfast, Northern and South Eastern Trusts failed to achieve the target (Table 4).

## Waits over 31 Days by Tumour Site

Of the 48 patients waiting longer than 31 days in June 2017, almost half (21, 43.8%) were diagnosed with urological cancer (Table 5).

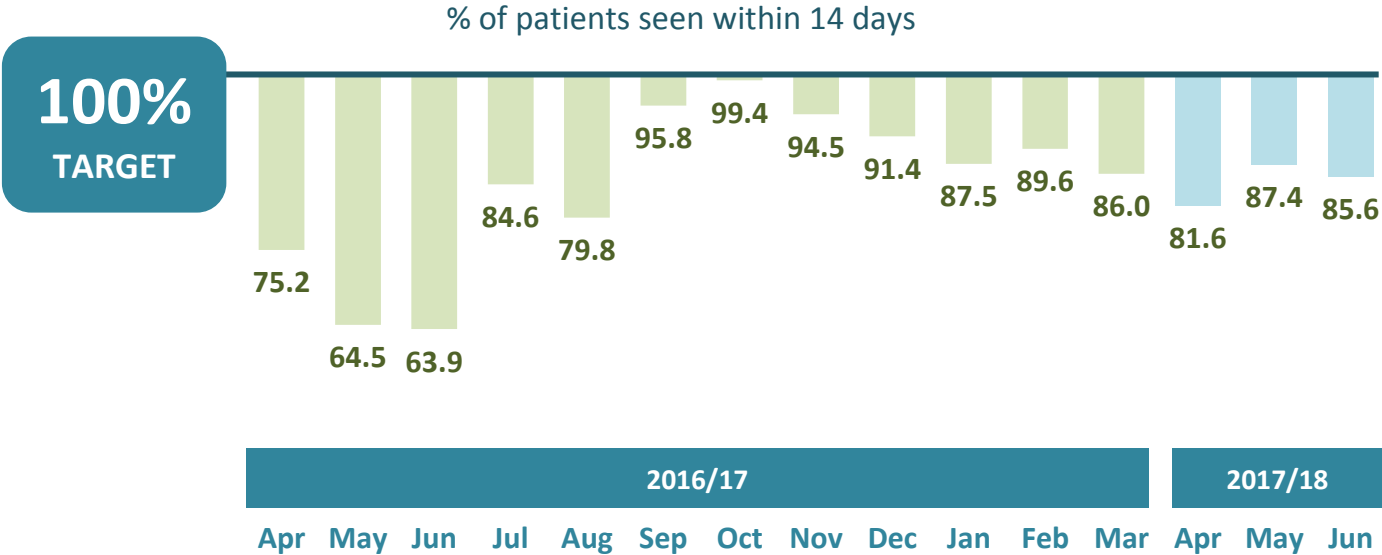
Number of patients waiting over 31 days by tumour site



## 14 Day Ministerial Target

All urgent breast cancer referrals should be seen within 14 days.

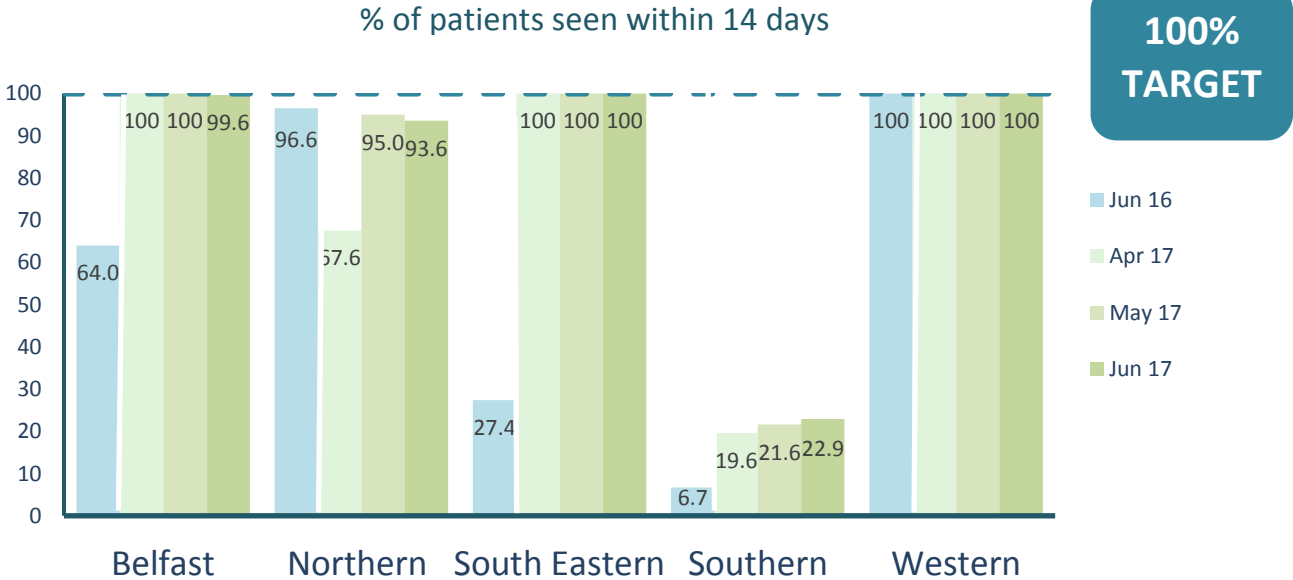
In June 2017, 1,329 patients were first seen by a breast cancer specialist following an urgent referral for suspect breast cancer, compared with 1,239 in May 2017 and 1,433 during June 2016 (Table 8).



The Ministerial target was not met.

In June 2017, 85.6% of patients were first seen within 14 days, compared with 87.4% in May 2017 and 63.9% during June 2016 (Table 8).

### Trust Performance



Across HSC Trusts, the South Eastern and Western Trusts met the 14 Day Ministerial target during all three months in the quarter, with all patients seen within 14 days. Belfast Trust met the target during April and May 2017. Northern and Southern Trusts failed to meet the target during all three months of the quarter. (Table 7).

## Breast cancer referrals

Information in this section relates to the number of referrals received by HSC Trusts for suspect breast cancer. This information is sourced from the Patient Administration System via the HSC Data Warehouse.

Readers should note that these data are not National Statistics but have been validated and quality assured by HSC Trusts prior to publication. Currently the Department is in the process of refining validation processes for these data, which should therefore be treated with caution. However, they have been published to help provide users with some contextual information in relation to the Ministerial Target relating to breast cancer waiting times.

### New Suspect Breast Cancer Referrals

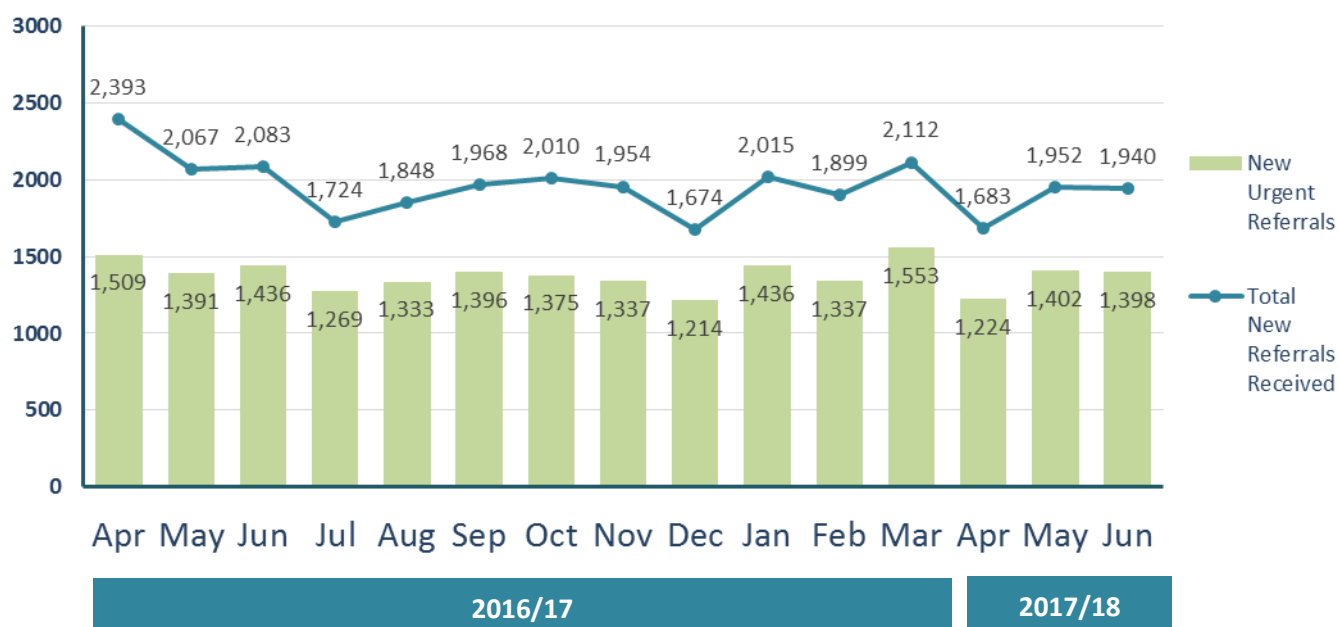
In June 2017, 1,940 new referrals for suspect breast cancer were received, this compares with 1,952 in May 2017 and 1,683 in April 2017. Referrals for suspect cancer can be for advice, assessment or both.

### New Urgent Suspect Breast Cancer Referrals

Of those new referrals for suspect breast cancer in June 2017, 1,398 (72.1%) were classified as urgent.

Approximately seven out of ten referrals received across Northern Ireland each month during the first quarter of 2017/18 were urgent referrals.

Number of New Referrals Received For Suspect Breast Cancer



## Additional Tables

**Table 1: Number of patients who commenced first treatment following an urgent GP referral for suspect cancer, in Northern Ireland (April - June 2017)<sup>1</sup>**

HSC Trust	Total treated			Treated within 62 days from receipt of referral			% treated within 62 days		
	Apr 2017	May 2017	Jun 2017	Apr 2017	May 2017	Jun 2017	Apr 2017	May 2017	Jun 2017
Belfast	99.5	97.5	109.5	56.0	60.5	69.5	56.3%	62.1%	63.5%
Northern	50.5	62.5	57.5	36.0	43.5	44.5	71.3%	69.6%	77.4%
South Eastern	63.0	98.5	89.5	31.5	53.0	49.5	50.0%	53.8%	55.3%
Southern	51.0	63.0	62.5	43.0	48.0	43.5	84.3%	76.2%	69.6%
Western	61.0	72.5	68.0	57.5	61.0	60.0	94.3%	84.1%	88.2%
<b>Northern Ireland</b>	<b>325</b>	<b>394</b>	<b>387</b>	<b>224</b>	<b>266</b>	<b>267</b>	<b>68.9%</b>	<b>67.5%</b>	<b>69.0%</b>

Source: Cancer Patient Pathway System (CaPPS)

<sup>1</sup>Refer to Explanatory Notes – Points 1-5.

**Table 2: Number of patients who commenced first treatment following an urgent GP referral for suspect cancer, by tumour site (April - June 2017)<sup>2</sup>**

Cancer Type	Total treated			Treated within 62 days from receipt of referral			% treated within 62 days		
	Apr 2017	May 2017	Jun 2017	Apr 2017	May 2017	Jun 2017	Apr 2017	May 2017	Jun 2017
Brain/ CNS	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	-	-
Breast	58	72	87	56	72	85	96.6%	100.0%	97.7%
Gynae	18	30	23	15	12	13	83.3%	40.0%	56.5%
Haematological	20	12	13	14	7	10	70.0%	58.3%	76.9%
Head/Neck	11	16	9	8	9	5	72.7%	56.3%	55.6%
Lower GI	35	44	50	19	19	23	54.3%	43.2%	46.0%
Lung	19	23	30	9	18	19	47.4%	78.3%	63.3%
Sarcomas	0	1	1	0	1	1	-	100.0%	100.0%
Skin	58	72	69	51	52	56	87.9%	72.2%	81.2%
Upper GI	28	23	20	11	17	8	39.3%	73.9%	40.0%
Urological	74	95	82	38	56	44	51.4%	58.9%	53.7%
Other	4	6	3	3	3	3	75.0%	50.0%	100.0%
<b>Northern Ireland</b>	<b>325</b>	<b>394</b>	<b>387</b>	<b>224</b>	<b>266</b>	<b>267</b>	<b>68.9%</b>	<b>67.5%</b>	<b>69.0%</b>

Source: Cancer Patient Pathway System (CaPPS)

<sup>2</sup>Refer to Explanatory Notes – Points 1-6.

**Table 3: Number of patients who commenced first treatment following an urgent GP referral for suspect cancer, in Northern Ireland (April 2016 – June 2017)<sup>3</sup>**

Month	Total Treated	Treated within 62 days from receipt of referral	% treated within 62 days
April 2016	327	224	68.5%
May 2016	336	233	69.3%
June 2016	385	277	71.9%
July 2016	313	221	70.6%
August 2016	371	250	67.4%
September 2016	370	234	63.2%
October 2016	350	229	65.4%
November 2016	382	256	67.0%
December 2016	339	233	68.7%
January 2017	377	253	67.1%
February 2017	360	251	69.7%
March 2017	339	234	69.0%
April 2017	325	224	68.9%
May 2017	394	266	67.5%
June 2017	387	267	69.0%

Source: Cancer Patient Pathway System (CaPPS)

<sup>3</sup>Refer to Explanatory Notes – Points 1-5 & 7

**Table 4: Number of patients who commenced first treatment, for all cancers in HSC Trusts in Northern Ireland (April - June 2017)<sup>4</sup>**

HSC Trust	Total treated			Treated within 31 days of a decision to treat			% treated within 31 days		
	Apr 2017	May 2017	Jun 2017	Apr 2017	May 2017	Jun 2017	Apr 2017	May 2017	Jun 2017
Belfast	291	346	364	267	307	328	91.8%	88.7%	90.1%
Northern	90	104	97	82	94	91	91.1%	90.4%	93.8%
South Eastern	106	146	151	100	136	146	94.3%	93.2%	96.7%
Southern	105	119	137	105	118	136	100.0%	99.2%	99.3%
Western	114	134	125	114	132	125	100.0%	98.5%	100.0%
<b>Northern Ireland</b>	<b>706</b>	<b>849</b>	<b>874</b>	<b>668</b>	<b>787</b>	<b>826</b>	<b>94.6%</b>	<b>92.7%</b>	<b>94.5%</b>

Source: Cancer Patient Pathway System (CaPPS)

<sup>4</sup>Refer to Explanatory Notes – Points 1-2 & 8-9.



**Table 5: Number of patients who commenced first treatment, for all cancers, in Northern Ireland by tumour site (April - June 2017)<sup>5</sup>**

Cancer Type	Total treated			Treated within 31 days of a decision to treat			% treated within 31 days		
	Apr 2017	May 2017	Jun 2017	Apr 2017	May 2017	Jun 2017	Apr 2017	May 2017	Jun 2017
Brain/ CNS	7	10	15	7	10	15	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Breast	115	140	167	107	133	159	93.0%	95.0%	95.2%
Gynae	31	49	51	31	36	43	100.0%	73.5%	84.3%
Haematological	68	62	59	68	62	59	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Head/Neck	23	39	28	23	39	27	100.0%	100.0%	96.4%
Lower GI	77	104	113	73	98	113	94.8%	94.2%	100.0%
Lung	69	98	89	66	94	87	95.7%	95.9%	97.8%
Sarcomas	2	1	3	1	1	2	50.0%	100.0%	66.7%
Skin	99	106	117	96	97	112	97.0%	91.5%	95.7%
Upper GI	65	58	78	65	56	76	100.0%	96.6%	97.4%
Urological	136	166	140	117	145	119	86.0%	87.3%	85.0%
Other	14	16	14	14	16	14	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
<b>Northern Ireland</b>	<b>706</b>	<b>849</b>	<b>874</b>	<b>668</b>	<b>787</b>	<b>826</b>	<b>94.6%</b>	<b>92.7%</b>	<b>94.5%</b>

Source: Cancer Patient Pathway System (CaPPS)

<sup>5</sup>Refer to Explanatory Notes – Points 1-2 & 8-10.

**Table 6: Number of patients who commenced first treatment, for all cancers, in Northern Ireland (April 2016 – June 2017)<sup>4</sup>**

Month	Total treated	Treated within 31 days of a decision to treat	% treated within 31 days
April 2016	797	734	92.1%
May 2016	774	725	93.7%
June 2016	857	799	93.2%
July 2016	732	681	93.0%
August 2016	835	789	94.5%
September 2016	823	772	93.8%
October 2016	795	750	94.3%
November 2016	866	825	95.3%
December 2016	795	765	96.2%
January 2017	841	793	94.3%
February 2017	796	756	95.0%
March 2017	793	747	94.2%
April 2017	706	668	94.6%
May 2017	849	787	92.7%
June 2017	874	826	94.5%

Source: Cancer Patient Pathway System (CaPPS)

<sup>4</sup>Refer to Explanatory Notes – Points 1-2 & 8-9

**Table 7: Number of patients seen by a breast cancer specialist following an urgent referral for suspect cancer in HSC Trusts in Northern Ireland (April - June 2017)<sup>6</sup>**

HSC Trust	Total seen			Seen within 14 days or less			% seen within 14 days		
	Apr 2017	May 2017	Jun 2017	Apr 2017	May 2017	Jun 2017	Apr 2017	May 2017	Jun 2017
Belfast	273	250	284	273	250	283	100.0%	100.0%	99.6%
Northern	287	357	389	194	339	364	67.6%	95.0%	93.6%
South Eastern	210	195	198	210	195	198	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Southern	153	176	214	30	38	49	19.6%	21.6%	22.9%
Western	248	261	244	248	261	244	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
<b>Northern Ireland</b>	<b>1,171</b>	<b>1,239</b>	<b>1,329</b>	<b>955</b>	<b>1,083</b>	<b>1,138</b>	<b>81.6%</b>	<b>87.4%</b>	<b>85.6%</b>

Source: Departmental Return SDR 2.

<sup>6</sup>Refer to Explanatory Notes – points 1-2 & 11-13

**Table 8: Number of patients seen by a breast cancer specialist following an urgent referral for suspect cancer in Northern Ireland (April 2016 – June 2017)<sup>6</sup>**

Month	Total seen	Seen within 14 days or less	% seen within 14 days
April 2016	1,287	968	75.2%
May 2016	1,268	818	64.5%
June 2016	1,433	916	63.9%
July 2016	1,094	925	84.6%
August 2016	1,346	1,074	79.8%
September 2016	1,381	1,323	95.8%
October 2016	1,290	1,282	99.4%
November 2016	1,301	1,230	94.5%
December 2016	1,211	1,107	91.4%
January 2017	1,102	964	87.5%
February 2017	1,226	1,099	89.6%
March 2017	1,491	1,283	86.0%
April 2017	1,171	955	81.6%
May 2017	1,239	1,083	87.4%
June 2017	1,329	1,138	85.6%

Source: Departmental Return SDR 2

<sup>6</sup>Refer to Explanatory Notes – points 1-2 & 11-13

**Table 9: Number of patients referred for suspect breast cancer in Northern Ireland (April 2016 – June 2017)<sup>7</sup>**

<b>Month</b>	<b>Total New Referrals Received</b>	<b>New Urgent Referrals</b>
April 2016	2,393	1,509
May 2016	2,067	1,391
June 2016	2,083	1,436
July 2016	1,724	1,269
August 2016	1,848	1,333
September 2016	1,968	1,396
October 2016	2,010	1,375
November 2016	1,954	1,337
December 2016	1,674	1,214
January 2017	2,015	1,436
February 2017	1,899	1,337
March 2017	2,112	1,553
April 2017	1,683	1,224
May 2017	1,952	1,402
June 2017	1,940	1,398

Source: Patient Administration System via HSC Data Warehouse

<sup>7</sup>Refer to Explanatory Notes – points 1 & 14

## Appendix 1: Explanatory Notes

1. The sources for the data contained in this release are the Outpatient Universe, Cancer Patient Pathway System (CaPPS) and Patient Administration System (PAS).
2. The draft 2017/18 Ministerial Target for cancer waiting times, as detailed in the Health and Social Care (Commissioning Plan) Direction (Northern Ireland) 2016, states that from April 2016, (i) at least 95% of patients should begin their first treatment for cancer within 62 days following an urgent GP referral for suspect cancer; (ii) at least 98% of patients diagnosed with cancer should receive their first definitive treatment within 31 days of a decision to treat; and (iii) all urgent breast cancer referrals should be seen within 14 days.
3. Data contained in Tables 1, 2, and 3 relate to patients who received a first definitive treatment for cancer (having been given an 'International Classification of Diseases 10' (ICD 10) diagnosis) during each of the three months covered in the publication, following an urgent referral for suspect cancer from a General Practitioner or a routine GP referral that has subsequently been reclassified as urgent by a cancer specialist. Data for all cancers are included with the exception of basal cell carcinoma. Figures also include all patients living outside Northern Ireland and all privately funded patients treated in Health and Social Care hospitals in Northern Ireland. Referrals from sources other than a GP, routine referrals and patients who have not been given an ICD 10 diagnosis are excluded.
4. The completed waiting time in Tables 1, 2, and 3 is measured from the date an initial urgent GP referral for suspect cancer is received by the Provider Health and Social Care Trust and ends on the date the patient receives 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.
5. The measurement of a patient's waiting time in Tables 1, 2, and 3 include cases in which a patient was initially referred to a particular Health and Social Trust for consultant assessment but was then subsequently transferred to another Health and Social Care Trust for treatment. In such cases, the responsibility for that patient is shared, with 0.5 allocated to the Trust where the patient was first assessed 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 70 days after their initial GP referral, both the South Eastern and Belfast HSC Trusts will report 0.5 of a patient treated who waited over 62 days.
6. Table 2 reflects the number of patients that were treated in 62 days or less for each tumour site. Tumour sites are an aggregation of applicable ICD 10 codes.
7. Between April 2008 and February 2009, the target relating to waiting time for treatment following an urgent GP referral for suspect cancer required that 'at least 75% of patients urgently referred with a suspect cancer should begin their first definitive treatment within 62 days of urgent GP referral'. From March 2009 onwards this target increased to 95% of patients.
8. Data contained in Tables 4, 5, and 6 relate to all patients who received a first definitive treatment for cancer (having been given an ICD 10 diagnosis) during each of the three months covered in the publication, irrespective of their source or type 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 treated in Health and Social Care hospitals in Northern Ireland. Patients that have not been given an ICD 10 diagnosis are excluded.

9. The completed waiting time in Tables 4, 5, and 6 is measured from the date a decision is taken to treat a patient for cancer and ends on the date the patient receives their first definitive treatment for cancer. The decision to treat is the date on which the patient and the clinician agree the planned treatment. 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.
10. Table 5 reflects the number of patients that were treated in 31 days or less for each tumour site. Tumour sites are an aggregation of applicable ICD 10 codes.
11. Data contained in Tables 7 and 8 relate 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 that were first seen during each of the three months covered in the publication. Figures also include patients living outside Northern Ireland and all privately funded patients seen in Health and Social Care hospitals in Northern Ireland.
12. The completed waiting time in Tables 7 and 8 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 attends their first outpatient appointment with a breast cancer specialist. Adjustments are made to the completed waiting time in the event of a patient cancelling, self-deferring or failing to attend a first outpatient appointment.
13. Figures provided in Tables 7 and 8 reflect all urgent referrals for breast cancer both from GP's and other practitioners.
14. Figures provided in the Breast Cancer Referrals section reflect all new referrals received for suspect breast cancer irrespective of their source of referral.
15. Information on the grouping of ICD 10 codes by tumour site is available at the following link: <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/articles/cancer-waiting-times>
16. HIB surveyed data providers during 2011/12 to ascertain the cost of producing, validating and submitting the information required for this publication. This relates to the time taken to generate, validate and submit data, over and above what is already required by their organisation for internal performance management purposes. The cost to data providers of compliance with HIB's requirements for this publication, based on HSC salary costs, was £2,378.
17. Monthly data relating to cancer waiting times have also been presented in spreadsheet format (Microsoft Excel), split by HSC Trust, and where applicable tumour site, in order to aid secondary analysis. These data are available at the following link: <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/articles/cancer-waiting-times>
18. Information on waiting times for the months of July, August and September 2017 will be published on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> January 2018.
19. Data contained within this publication are National Statistics except for breast cancer referrals which are currently statistics in development.

**Further information** on cancer waiting times in Northern Ireland, is available from:

**Jennifer Lynn**

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Information & Analysis Directorate

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Internet address: <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications>