

INFORMATION  
ANALYSIS  
DIRECTORATE



# Northern Ireland Waiting Time Statistics: Cancer Waiting Times (October - December 2017)



# READER INFORMATION

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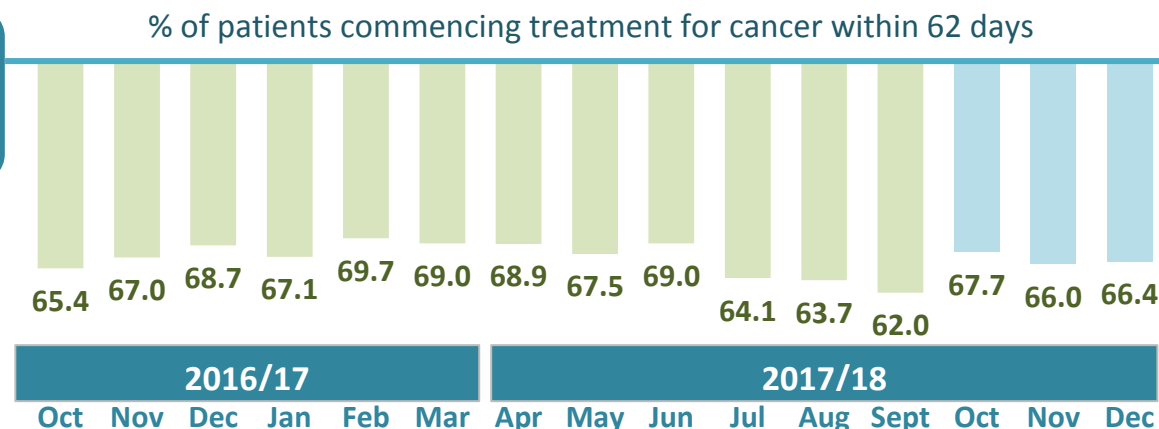
<b>Purpose:</b>	<p>This publication presents information on waiting times for cancer services at hospitals in Northern Ireland during October, November and December 2017 and reports on the performance of Health and Social Care (HSC) Trusts in Northern Ireland, against the draft 2017/18 Ministerial Target 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 December 2017, 348 patients commenced their first treatment for cancer following an urgent GP referral for suspect cancer, compared with 424 in November 2017, and 339 in December 2016 (Table 3).

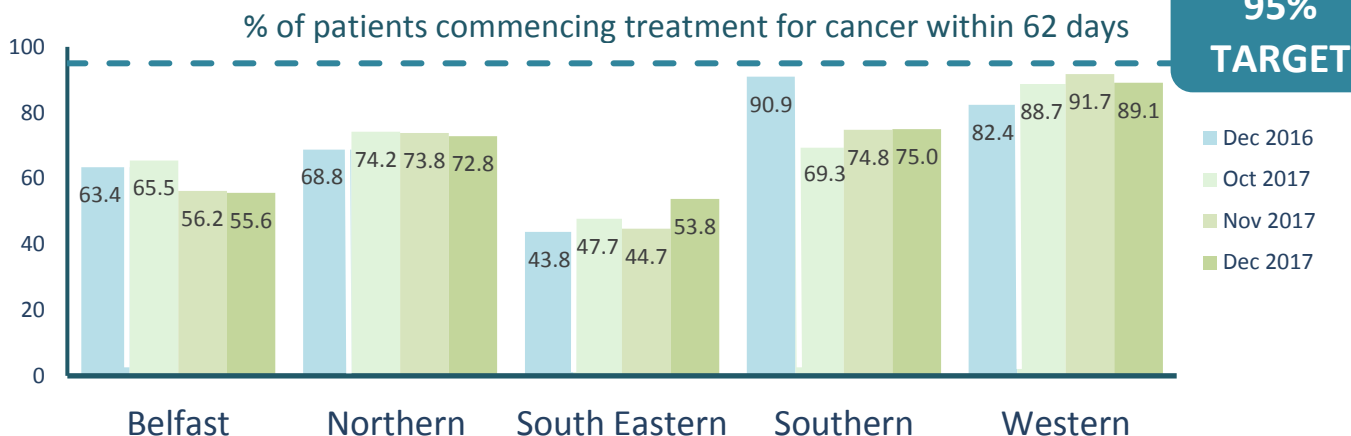
**95%**  
TARGET



The Ministerial target was not met.

In December 2017, 66.4% of patients commenced their first treatment for cancer within 62 days of an urgent GP referral for suspect cancer, compared with 66.0% in November 2017 and 68.7% during December 2016 (Table 3).

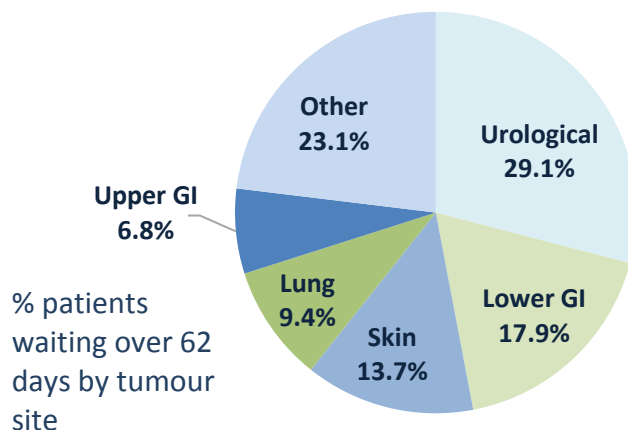
### Trust Performance



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

### Waits over 62 Days by Tumour Site

Of the 117 patients waiting longer than 62 days for treatment in December 2017, almost one third (34, 29.1%) were diagnosed with urological cancer. (Table 2).

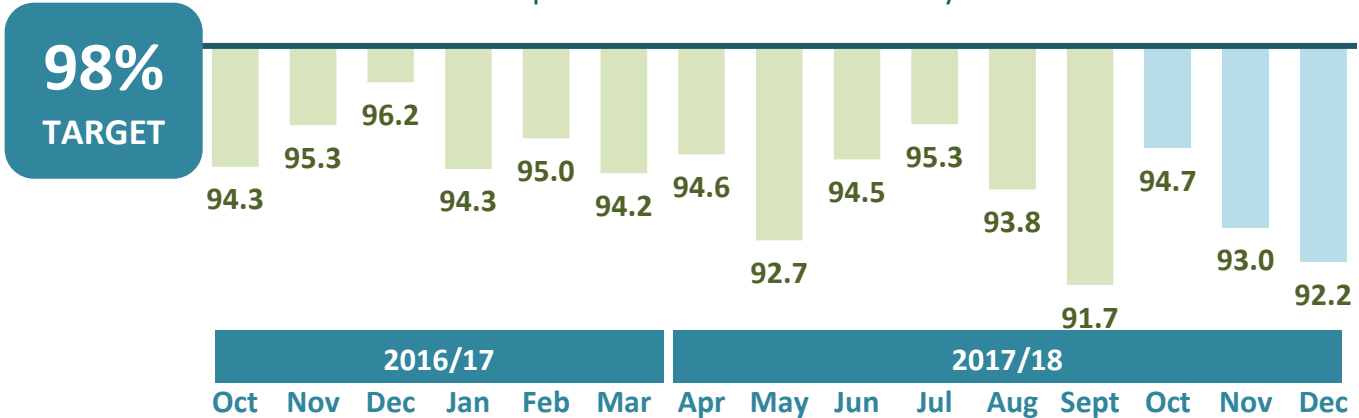


## 31 Day Ministerial Target

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

In December 2017, 796 patients commenced their first treatment for cancer following a decision to treat, compared with 954 in November 2017 and 795 during December 2016. (Table 6).

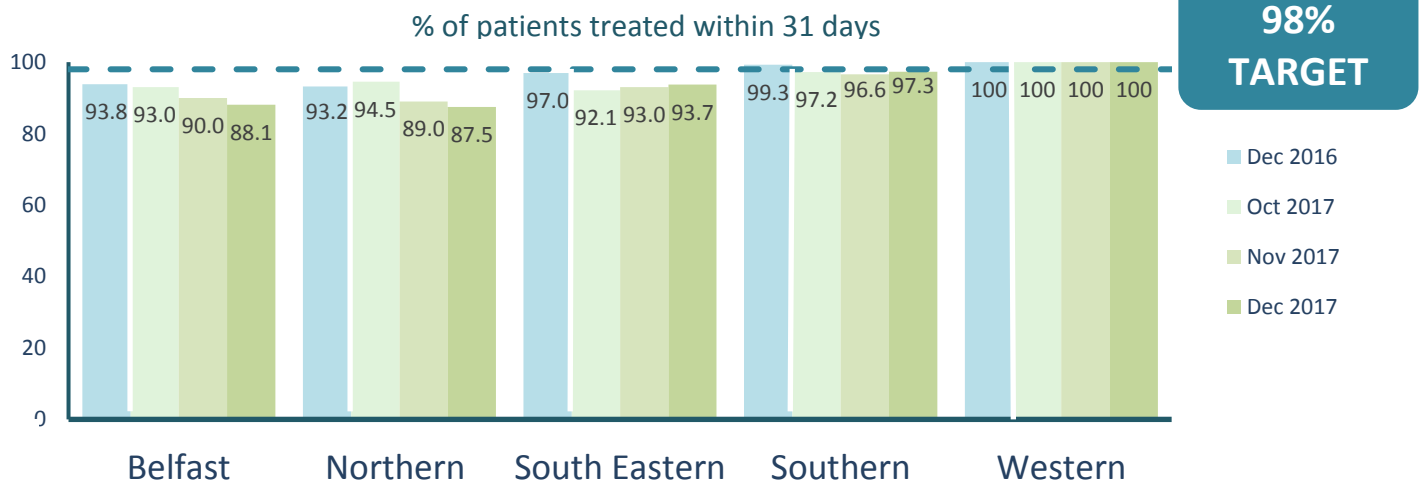
% of patients treated within 31 days



The Ministerial target was not met.

In December 2017, 92.2% of patients were treated within 31 days compared with 93.0% in November 2017 and 96.2% during December 2016 (Table 6).

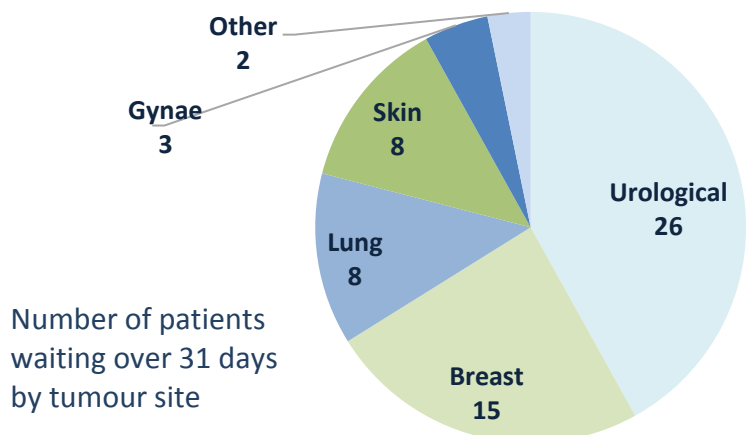
## Trust Performance



During December 2017, Western HSC Trust achieved the 98% Ministerial target, having all patients treated within 31 days following a decision to treat. The remaining four Trusts failed to achieve the target (Table 4).

## Waits over 31 Days by Tumour Site

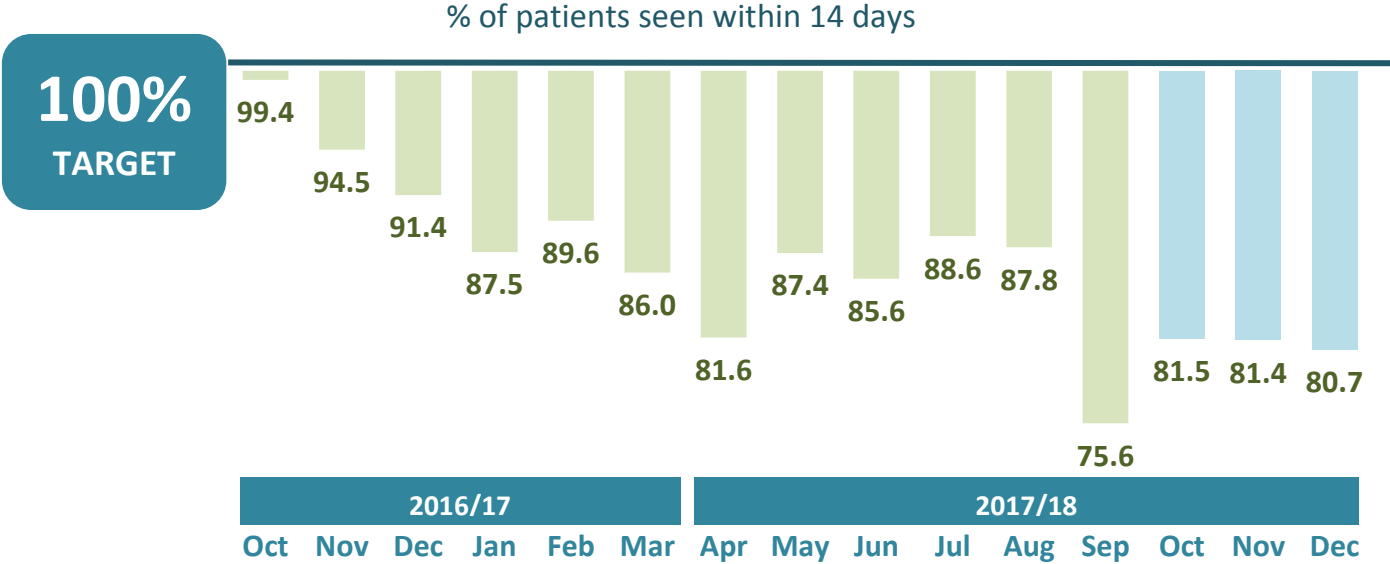
Of the 62 patients waiting longer than 31 days in December 2017, two fifths (26, 41.9%) were diagnosed with urological cancer (Table 5).



## 14 Day Ministerial Target

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

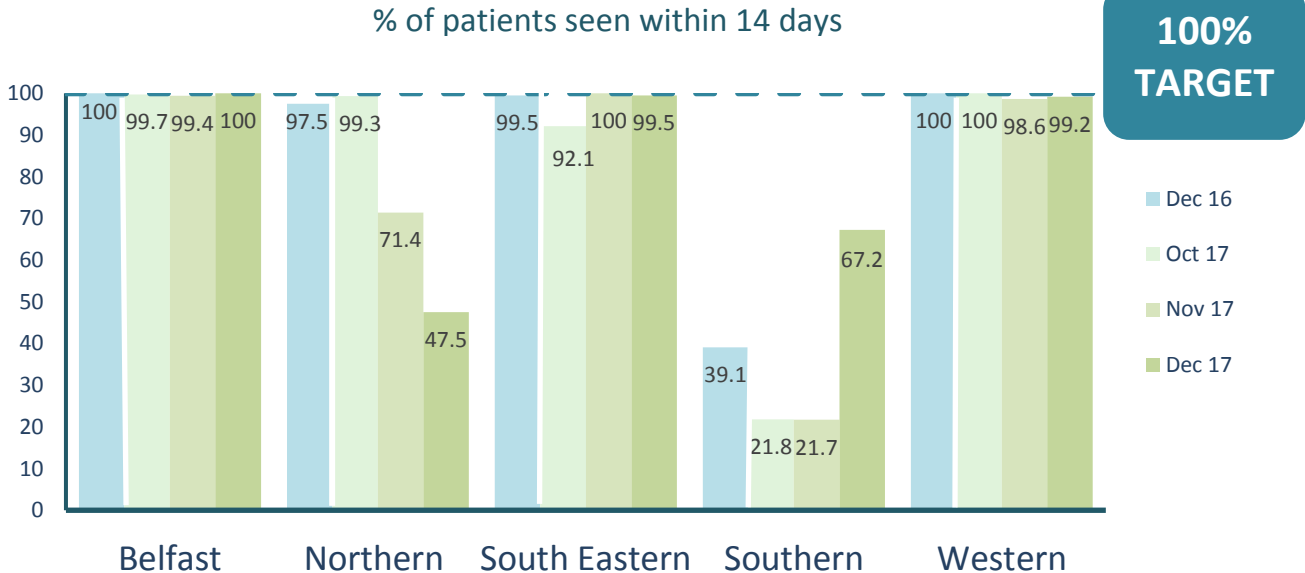
In December 2017, 1,266 patients were first seen by a breast cancer specialist following an urgent referral for suspect breast cancer, compared with 1,370 in November 2017 and 1,211 during December 2016 (Table 8).



The Ministerial target was not met.

In December 2017, 80.7% of patients were first seen within 14 days, compared with 81.4% in November 2017 and 91.4% during December 2016 (Table 8).

### Trust Performance



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

## 14 Day Ministerial Target Additional context

Due to temporary capacity issues within Southern Trust there is currently a need for the Southern Trust to transfer breast surgery patients (including suspect cancers) to other Trusts in order for them to be seen / treated in a timely manner. In some cases it is possible that patients will have breached the ministerial target prior to this transfer taking place.

During October, November and December 2017 Belfast, South Eastern and Western Trusts saw a total of 119 patients with an urgent breast cancer referral that had been transferred to them from Southern Trust. Belfast Trust saw 44 patients, South Eastern Trust 43 patients and Western Trust 32 patients. Northern Trust did not see any patients with an urgent breast cancer referral from the Southern Trust during this time frame.

Whilst the Ministerial target is monitored against all patients seen following an urgent breast cancer referral, the tables below show, as an indicator of impact on Trusts only, the performance of each Trust with Southern Trust patients excluded.

### Belfast Trust urgent breast cancer referrals seen, excluding patients referred from Southern Trust

	Number of Patients First seen within 14 days or less	Number of Patients First seen over 14 days	% seen within 14 days
<b>October 2017</b>	302	1	99.7%
<b>November 2017</b>	328	1	99.7%
<b>December 2017</b>	235	0	100.0%

Source: Patient Administration System via HSC Data Warehouse

### South Eastern Trust urgent breast cancer referrals seen, excluding patients referred from Southern Trust

	Number of Patients First seen within 14 days or less	Number of Patients First seen over 14 days	% seen within 14 days
<b>October 2017</b>	205	0	100.0%
<b>November 2017</b>	238	0	100.0%
<b>December 2017</b>	191	0	100.0%

Source: Patient Administration System via HSC Data Warehouse

### Western Trust urgent breast cancer referrals seen, excluding patients referred from Southern Trust

	Number of Patients First seen within 14 days or less	Number of Patients First seen over 14 days	% seen within 14 days
<b>October 2017</b>	222	0	100.0%
<b>November 2017</b>	260	0	100.0%
<b>December 2017</b>	247	0	100.0%

Source: Patient Administration System via HSC Data Warehouse

## 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

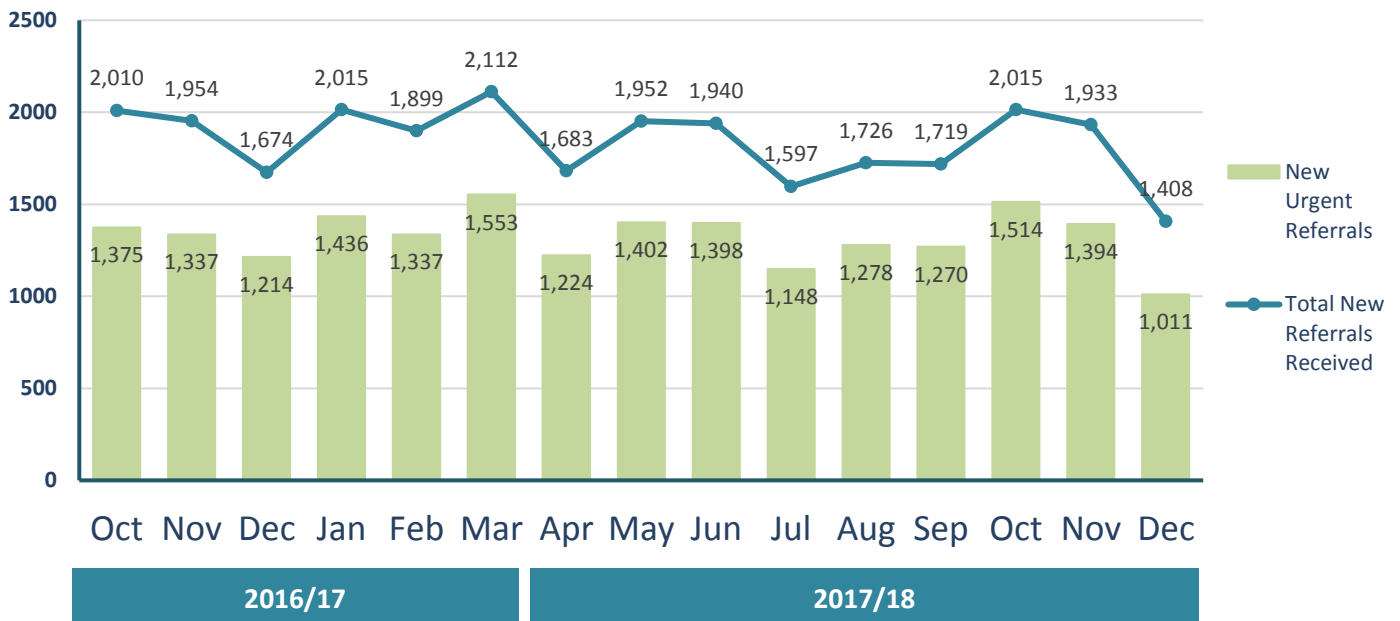
In December 2017, 1,408 new referrals for suspect breast cancer were received, this compares with 1,933 in November 2017 and 2,015 in October 2017. Referrals for suspect cancer can be for advice, assessment or both.

### New Urgent Suspect Breast Cancer Referrals

Of those new referrals for suspect breast cancer in December 2017, 1,011 (71.8%) were classified as urgent.

Approximately seven out of ten referrals received across Northern Ireland each month during the first three quarters 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 (October - December 2017)<sup>1</sup>**

HSC Trust	Total treated			Treated within 62 days from receipt of referral			% treated within 62 days		
	Oct 2017	Nov 2017	Dec 2017	Oct 2017	Nov 2017	Dec 2017	Oct 2017	Nov 2017	Dec 2017
Belfast	103.0	132.5	102.5	67.5	74.5	57.0	65.5%	56.2%	55.6%
Northern	62.0	63.0	62.5	46.0	46.5	45.5	74.2%	73.8%	72.8%
South Eastern	64.0	80.5	78.0	30.5	36.0	42.0	47.7%	44.7%	53.8%
Southern	63.5	75.5	50.0	44.0	56.5	37.5	69.3%	74.8%	75.0%
Western	48.5	72.5	55.0	43.0	66.5	49.0	88.7%	91.7%	89.1%
<b>Northern Ireland</b>	<b>341</b>	<b>424</b>	<b>348</b>	<b>231</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>231</b>	<b>67.7%</b>	<b>66.0%</b>	<b>66.4%</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 (October - December 2017)<sup>2</sup>**

Cancer Type	Total treated			Treated within 62 days from receipt of referral			% treated within 62 days		
	Oct 2017	Nov 2017	Dec 2017	Oct 2017	Nov 2017	Dec 2017	Oct 2017	Nov 2017	Dec 2017
Brain/ CNS	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	-	-
Breast	66	75	75	61	67	69	92.4%	89.3%	92.0%
Gynae	22	28	20	15	18	13	68.2%	64.3%	65.0%
Haematological	8	25	16	7	19	11	87.5%	76.0%	68.8%
Head/Neck	23	25	14	13	12	8	56.5%	48.0%	57.1%
Lower GI	30	43	44	11	19	23	36.7%	44.2%	52.3%
Lung	41	32	23	27	19	12	65.9%	59.4%	52.2%
Sarcomas	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	-	-
Skin	64	74	68	48	58	52	75.0%	78.4%	76.5%
Upper GI	20	22	17	12	12	9	60.0%	54.5%	52.9%
Urological	65	93	66	36	52	32	55.4%	55.9%	48.5%
Other	2	7	5	1	4	2	50.0%	57.1%	40.0%
<b>Northern Ireland</b>	<b>341</b>	<b>424</b>	<b>348</b>	<b>231</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>231</b>	<b>67.7%</b>	<b>66.0%</b>	<b>66.4%</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 – December 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%
July 2017	320	205	64.1%
August 2017	331	211	63.7%
September 2017	368	228	62.0%
October 2017	341	231	67.7%
November 2017	424	280	66.0%
December 2017	348	231	66.4%

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 (October - December 2017)<sup>4</sup>**

HSC Trust	Total treated			Treated within 31 days of a decision to treat			% treated within 31 days		
	Oct 2017	Nov 2017	Dec 2017	Oct 2017	Nov 2017	Dec 2017	Oct 2017	Nov 2017	Dec 2017
Belfast	330	370	318	307	333	280	93.0%	90.0%	88.1%
Northern	110	127	96	104	113	84	94.5%	89.0%	87.5%
South Eastern	139	142	142	128	132	133	92.1%	93.0%	93.7%
Southern	143	179	113	139	173	110	97.2%	96.6%	97.3%
Western	116	136	127	116	136	127	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
<b>Northern Ireland</b>	<b>838</b>	<b>954</b>	<b>796</b>	<b>794</b>	<b>887</b>	<b>734</b>	<b>94.7%</b>	<b>93.0%</b>	<b>92.2%</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 (October - December 2017)<sup>5</sup>**

Cancer Type	Total treated			Treated within 31 days of a decision to treat			% treated within 31 days		
	Oct 2017	Nov 2017	Dec 2017	Oct 2017	Nov 2017	Dec 2017	Oct 2017	Nov 2017	Dec 2017
Brain/ CNS	15	10	9	15	10	9	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Breast	133	130	147	126	110	132	94.7%	84.6%	89.8%
Gynae	42	53	36	41	51	33	97.6%	96.2%	91.7%
Haematological	54	76	63	54	76	63	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Head/Neck	53	47	35	52	46	35	98.1%	97.9%	100.0%
Lower GI	92	109	85	90	108	85	97.8%	99.1%	100.0%
Lung	108	111	84	101	100	76	93.5%	90.1%	90.5%
Sarcomas	3	2	3	3	2	3	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Skin	135	159	138	125	149	130	92.6%	93.7%	94.2%
Upper GI	59	66	53	58	65	52	98.3%	98.5%	98.1%
Urological	131	170	129	118	149	103	90.1%	87.6%	79.8%
Other	13	21	14	11	21	13	84.6%	100.0%	92.9%
<b>Northern Ireland</b>	<b>838</b>	<b>954</b>	<b>796</b>	<b>794</b>	<b>887</b>	<b>734</b>	<b>94.7%</b>	<b>93.0%</b>	<b>92.2%</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 – December 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%
July 2017	743	708	95.3%
August 2017	811	761	93.8%
September 2017	856	785	91.7%
October 2017	838	794	94.7%
November 2017	954	887	93.0%
December 2017	796	734	92.2%

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 (October - December 2017)<sup>6</sup>

HSC Trust	Total seen			Seen within 14 days or less			% seen within 14 days		
	Oct 2017	Nov 2017	Dec 2017	Oct 2017	Nov 2017	Dec 2017	Oct 2017	Nov 2017	Dec 2017
Belfast	303	357	251	302	355	251	99.7%	99.4%	100.0%
Northern	293	276	314	291	197	149	99.3%	71.4%	47.5%
South Eastern	227	238	212	209	238	211	92.1%	100.0%	99.5%
Southern	289	217	232	63	47	156	21.8%	21.7%	67.2%
Western	222	282	257	222	278	255	100.0%	98.6%	99.2%
<b>Northern Ireland</b>	<b>1,334</b>	<b>1,370</b>	<b>1,266</b>	<b>1,087</b>	<b>1,115</b>	<b>1,022</b>	<b>81.5%</b>	<b>81.4%</b>	<b>80.7%</b>

Source: Patient Administration System via HSC Data Warehouse

<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 – December 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%
July 2017	1,015	899	88.6%
August 2017	1,155	1,014	87.8%
September 2017	1,256	950	75.6%
October 2017	1,334	1,087	81.5%
November 2017	1,370	1,115	81.4%
December 2017	1,266	1,022	80.7%

Source: Patient Administration System via HSC Data Warehouse

<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 – December 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
July 2017	1,597	1,148
August 2017	1,726	1,278
September 2017	1,719	1,270
October 2017	2,015	1,514
November 2017	1,933	1,394
December 2017	1,408	1,011

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) 2017, states that from April 2017, (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 January, February and March 2018 will be published on Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> June 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:

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