

INFORMATION  
ANALYSIS  
DIRECTORATE



# Northern Ireland Waiting Time Statistics: Cancer Waiting Times (January – March 2016)



Department of  
**Health**  
An Roinn  
**Sláinte**

## Reader Information

Purpose	<p>This publication presents information on waiting times for cancer services in Northern Ireland and reports on the performance of Health and Social Care (HSC) Trusts in Northern Ireland, against the 2015/16 Ministerial Target for cancer care services, which state that:</p> <p><i>“From April 2015, 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>This statistics release gives details of the waiting times for patients accessing cancer services at hospitals in Northern Ireland during January, February and March 2016. All data are presented by Health and Social Care Trust and, where applicable, by tumour site.</p>
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Statistical Quality	Information detailed in this release has been quality assured with HSC Trusts prior to release.
Target audience	Department of Health (DoH), Chief Executives of the Board and Trusts in Northern Ireland, health care professionals, academics, Health & Social Care stakeholders, media and general public.
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# Latest Quarterly Performance

## 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.

	January 2016	February 2016	March 2016
Percentage treated within 62 days following urgent referral	66.2%	71.9%	71.6%
Achieves Ministerial Target?	<b>NO</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>NO</b>

## 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.

	January 2016	February 2016	March 2016
Percentage treated within 31 days of decision to treat	94.7%	96.3%	95.5%
Achieves Ministerial Target?	<b>NO</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>NO</b>

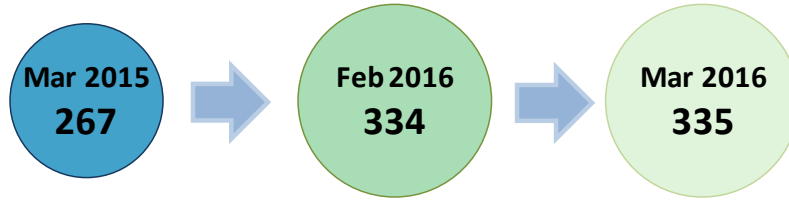
## 14 Day Ministerial Target

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

	January 2016	February 2016	March 2016
Percentage seen within 14 days of Breast Cancer referral	71.0%	86.0%	88.4%
Achieves Ministerial Target?	<b>NO</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>NO</b>

# 62 Day Target

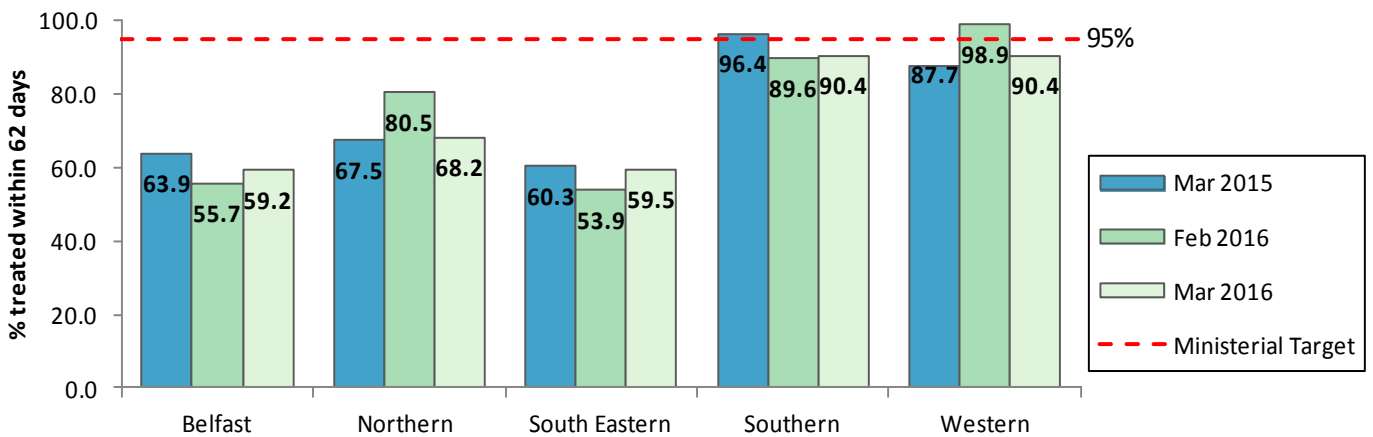
## Patients first treated following an urgent GP referral for Suspected Cancer



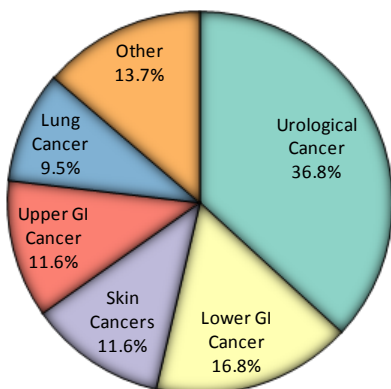
In March 2016, 335 patients commenced their first treatment, an increase of 68 since March 2015 (Table 3).

For the same period the percentage treated within 62 days decreased from 72.3% (193 patients) in March 2015 to 71.6% (240 patients) in March 2016 (Table 3).

## Trust Performance



All HSC Trusts failed to meet the Ministerial target during March 2016 (Table 1).

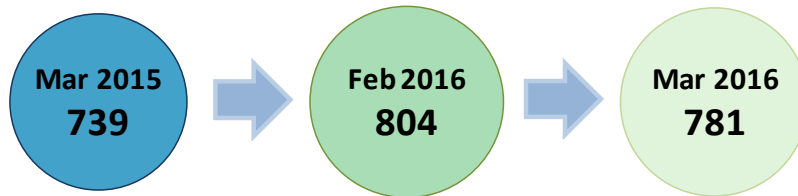


## Waits over 62 Days by Tumour Site

Of the 95 patients waiting longer than 62 days for treatment in March 2016, 35 (36.8%) were diagnosed with urological cancer and 16 (16.8%) were diagnosed with lower gastrointestinal (GI) cancer (Table 2).

# 31 Day Target

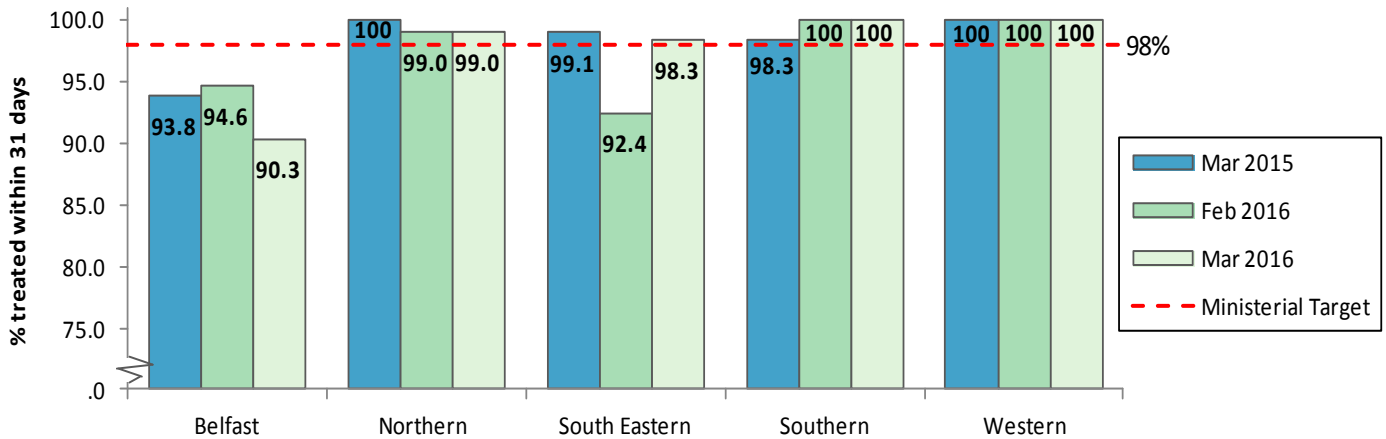
## No. of Patients first treated following a decision to treat



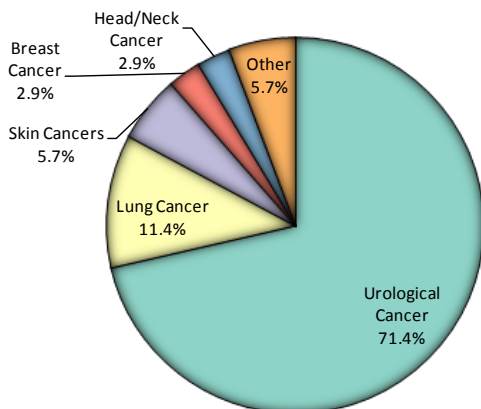
In March 2016, 781 patients were first treated, an increase of 42 since March 2015 (Table 6).

For the same period the percentage of patients treated within 31 days decreased from 96.9% (716 patients) in March 2015 to 95.5% (746 patients) in March 2016 (Table 6).

## Trust Performance



All HSC Trusts with the exception of Belfast Trust achieved the 98% Ministerial target, during March 2016 (Table 4).

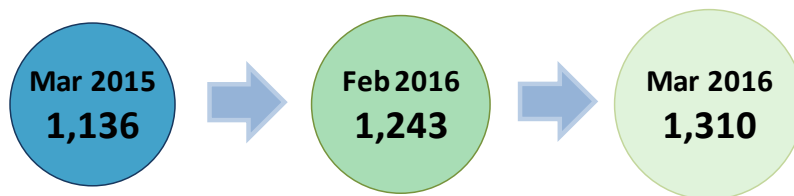


## Waits over 31 Days by Tumour Site

Of the 35 patients waiting longer than 31 days in March 2016, almost 3 quarters (25, 71.4%) were diagnosed with urological cancer (Table 5).

# 14 Day Target

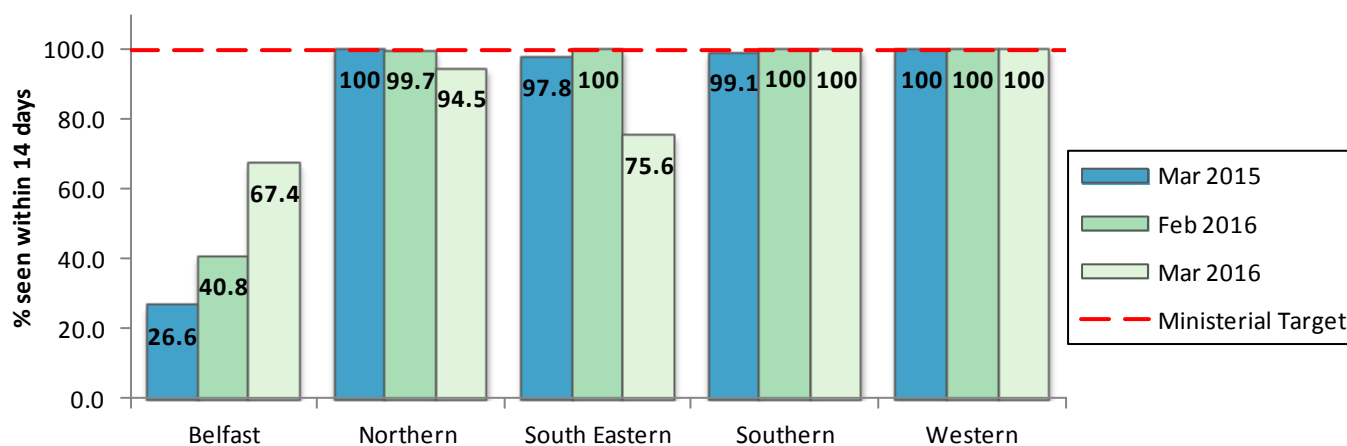
## No. of Patients first seen by a breast cancer specialist following an urgent referral for suspect cancer



In March 2016, 1,310 patients were first seen, an increase of 174 since March 2015 (Table 8).

For the same period the percentage of patients first seen increased from 82.2% (934 patients) in March 2015 to 88.4% (1,158 patients) in March 2016 (Table 8).

## Trust Performance



Across HSC Trusts, the Southern and Western Trust met the 14 Day Ministerial target during March 2016, with all patients seen within 14 days (Table 7).

## Additional Tables

**Table 1: Number of patients who commenced first treatment following an urgent GP referral for suspect cancer, in Northern Ireland (January – March 2016)<sup>2</sup>**

HSC Trust	Commenced Treatment			Commenced within 62 days of Referral			% within 62 days		
	Jan 2016	Feb 2016	Mar 2016	Jan 2016	Feb 2016	Mar 2016	Jan 2016	Feb 2016	Mar 2016
Belfast	99.5	105.0	98.0	52.5	58.5	58.0	52.8%	55.7%	59.2%
Northern	58.5	56.5	64.5	36.0	45.5	44.0	61.5%	80.5%	68.2%
South Eastern	65.0	64.0	58.0	38.5	34.5	34.5	59.2%	53.9%	59.5%
Southern	42.5	62.5	67.5	36.5	56.0	61.0	85.9%	89.6%	90.4%
Western	48.5	46.0	47.0	44.5	45.5	42.5	91.8%	98.9%	90.4%
<b>Northern Ireland</b>	<b>314</b>	<b>334</b>	<b>335</b>	<b>208</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>66.2%</b>	<b>71.9%</b>	<b>71.6%</b>

Source: Cancer Patient Pathway System (CaPPS)

<sup>2</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 (January – March 2016)<sup>3</sup>**

Cancer Type	Total treated			Treated within 62 days from receipt of Referral			% treated within 62 days		
	Jan 2016	Feb 2016	Mar 2016	Jan 2016	Feb 2016	Mar 2016	Jan 2016	Feb 2016	Mar 2016
Brain/ CNS	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	-	-
Breast	58	68	55	50	65	55	86.2%	95.6%	100.0%
Gynae	17	13	18	11	10	15	64.7%	76.9%	83.3%
Haematological	10	12	10	9	8	10	90.0%	66.7%	100.0%
Head/Neck	9	20	13	6	13	6	66.7%	65.0%	46.2%
Lower GI	34	37	32	15	20	16	44.1%	54.1%	50.0%
Lung	23	37	31	15	25	22	65.2%	67.6%	71.0%
Sarcomas	0	0	2	0	0	2	-	-	100.0%
Skin	54	56	64	39	42	53	72.2%	75.0%	82.8%
Upper GI	30	17	18	16	9	7	53.3%	52.9%	38.9%
Urological	72	71	86	43	47	51	59.7%	66.2%	59.3%
Other	7	3	6	4	1	3	57.1%	33.3%	50.0%
<b>Northern Ireland</b>	<b>314</b>	<b>334</b>	<b>335</b>	<b>208</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>66.2%</b>	<b>71.9%</b>	<b>71.6%</b>

Source: Cancer Patient Pathway System (CaPPS)

<sup>3</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 (January 2015 – March 2016)<sup>4</sup>**

Month	Commenced Treatment	Commenced within 62 days of referral	% treated within 62 days
January 2015	316	227	71.8%
February 2015	303	213	70.3%
March 2015	267	193	72.3%
April 2015	304	236	77.6%
May 2015	302	222	73.5%
June 2015	347	241	69.5%
July 2015	332	240	72.3%
August 2015	302	198	65.6%
September 2015	358	249	69.6%
October 2015	305	196	64.3%
November 2015	385	286	74.3%
December 2015	370	267	72.2%
January 2016	314	208	66.2%
February 2016	334	240	71.9%
March 2016	335	240	71.6%

Source: Cancer Patient Pathway System (CaPPS)

<sup>4</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 (January – March 2016)<sup>6</sup>**

HSC Trust	Total treated			Treated within 31 days of a decision to treat			% treated within 31 days		
	Jan 2016	Feb 2016	Mar 2016	Jan 2016	Feb 2016	Mar 2016	Jan 2016	Feb 2016	Mar 2016
Belfast	314	351	330	283	332	298	90.1%	94.6%	90.3%
Northern	107	96	97	103	95	96	96.3%	99.0%	99.0%
South Eastern	129	131	119	124	121	117	96.1%	92.4%	98.3%
Southern	113	127	136	113	127	136	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Western	109	99	99	108	99	99	99.1%	100.0%	100.0%
<b>Northern Ireland</b>	<b>772</b>	<b>804</b>	<b>781</b>	<b>731</b>	<b>774</b>	<b>746</b>	<b>94.7%</b>	<b>96.3%</b>	<b>95.5%</b>

Source: Cancer Patient Pathway System (CaPPS)

<sup>6</sup>Refer to Explanatory Notes – Points 1-2 & 8-9.



**Table 5: Number of patients who commenced first treatment, by tumour site (January – March 2016)<sup>7</sup>**

Cancer Type	Total treated			Treated within 31 days of a decision to treat			% treated within 31 days		
	Jan 2016	Feb 2016	Mar 2016	Jan 2016	Feb 2016	Mar 2016	Jan 2016	Feb 2016	Mar 2016
Brain/ CNS	12	6	8	11	6	8	91.7%	100.0%	100.0%
Breast	128	129	130	125	129	129	97.7%	100.0%	99.2%
Gynae	36	39	40	34	38	40	94.4%	97.4%	100.0%
Haematological	58	54	48	58	54	48	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Head/Neck	17	41	33	16	41	32	94.1%	100.0%	97.0%
Lower GI	97	108	79	92	106	78	94.8%	98.1%	98.7%
Lung	79	101	96	78	99	92	98.7%	98.0%	95.8%
Sarcomas	5	4	5	4	4	5	80.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Skin	116	106	104	110	100	102	94.8%	94.3%	98.1%
Upper GI	71	60	68	68	56	67	95.8%	93.3%	98.5%
Urological	137	138	150	120	124	125	87.6%	89.9%	83.3%
Other	16	18	20	15	17	20	93.8%	94.4%	100.0%
<b>Northern Ireland</b>	<b>772</b>	<b>804</b>	<b>781</b>	<b>731</b>	<b>774</b>	<b>746</b>	<b>94.7%</b>	<b>96.3%</b>	<b>95.5%</b>

Source: Cancer Patient Pathway System (CaPPS)

<sup>7</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 (January 2015 – March 2016)<sup>6</sup>**

Month	Total treated	Treated within 31 days of a decision to treat	% treated within 31 days
January 2015	735	691	94.0%
February 2015	692	662	95.7%
March 2015	739	716	96.9%
April 2015	733	708	96.6%
May 2015	697	665	95.4%
June 2015	821	793	96.6%
July 2015	820	792	96.6%
August 2015	727	698	96.0%
September 2015	805	776	96.4%
October 2015	807	782	96.9%
November 2015	852	810	95.1%
December 2015	820	795	97.0%
January 2016	772	731	94.7%
February 2016	804	774	96.3%
March 2016	781	746	95.5%

Source: Cancer Patient Pathway System (CaPPS)

<sup>6</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 (January – March 2016)<sup>9</sup>**

HSC Trust	Total seen			Waited 14 days or less			% seen within 14 days		
	Jan 2016	Feb 2016	Mar 2016	Jan 2016	Feb 2016	Mar 2016	Jan 2016	Feb 2016	Mar 2016
Belfast	313	292	282	117	119	190	37.4%	40.8%	67.4%
Northern	329	292	291	190	291	275	57.8%	99.7%	94.5%
South Eastern	163	154	180	161	154	136	98.8%	100.0%	75.6%
Southern	259	264	261	228	264	261	88.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Western	205	241	296	205	241	296	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
<b>Northern Ireland</b>	<b>1,269</b>	<b>1,243</b>	<b>1,310</b>	<b>901</b>	<b>1,069</b>	<b>1,158</b>	<b>71.0%</b>	<b>86.0%</b>	<b>88.4%</b>

Source: Departmental Return SDR 2.

<sup>9</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 (January 2015 – March 2016)<sup>9,10</sup>**

Month	Total seen	Waited 14 days or less	% seen within 14 days
January 2015	1,045	986	94.4%
February 2015	954	859	90.0%
March 2015	1,136	934	82.2%
April 2015	1,219	954	78.3%
May 2015	1,161	952	82.0%
June 2015	1,336	1,088	81.4%
July 2015	1,208	1,032	85.4%
August 2015	1,161	940	81.0%
September 2015	1,254	1,096	87.4%
October 2015	1,324	1,115	84.2%
November 2015	1,548	785	50.7%
December 2015	1,503	744	49.5%
January 2016	1,269	901	71.0%
February 2016	1,243	1,069	86.0%
March 2016	1,310	1,158	88.4%

Source: Departmental Return SDR 2

<sup>9</sup>Refer to Explanatory Notes – points 1-2 & 11-13

## Appendix 1: Explanatory Notes

1. The sources for the data contained in this release are the Departmental Return SDR2 and the Cancer Patient Pathway System (CaPPS).
2. The 2015/16 Ministerial Target for cancer waiting times, as detailed in the Health and Social Care (Commissioning Plan) Direction (Northern Ireland) 2014, states that from April 2015, (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. 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>
15. 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.
16. 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>
17. Information on waiting times for the months of April, May and June 2016 will be published on Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> September 2016.
18. Data contained within this publication are National Statistics.

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

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