

INFORMATION  
ANALYSIS  
DIRECTORATE



# Northern Ireland Waiting Time Statistics: Cancer Waiting Times (October – December 2016)



Department of  
**Health**

An Roinn Sláinte

Máinnystrie O Poustie

[www.health-ni.gov.uk](http://www.health-ni.gov.uk)

## Reader Information

Purpose	<p>This publication presents information on waiting times for cancer services at hospitals in Northern Ireland during October, November and December 2016 and reports on the performance of Health and Social Care (HSC) Trusts in Northern Ireland, against the 2016/17 Ministerial Target for cancer care services, which state that:</p> <p><i>“From April 2016, 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>
Statistical Quality	<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>
Authors	<p>Simon Gibson, Cryss Foster &amp; Siobhán Morgan</p>
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Copyright	<p>This publication is Crown copyright and may be reproduced free of charge in any format or medium. Any material used must be acknowledged, and the title of the publication specified.</p>
Amendment	<p>Please note that following a validation exercise, it was discovered that since April 2016, 24 patients who were treated in either Northern or Belfast HSC Trusts should have been apportioned to the Western HSC Trust. This has now been amended and whilst regional performance was unaffected, performance of individual Trusts has varied slightly. The downloadable tables published alongside this release have been similarly updated with the amended figures.</p>

# 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.

	October 2016	November 2016	December 2016
Percentage treated within 62 days following urgent referral	65.6%	67.0%	68.6%
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.

	October 2016	November 2016	December 2016
Percentage treated within 31 days of decision to treat	94.3%	95.3%	96.2%
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.

	October 2016	November 2016	December 2016
Percentage seen within 14 days of Breast Cancer referral	99.4%	94.5%	91.4%
Achieves Ministerial Target?	<b>NO</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>NO</b>

# 62 Day Target

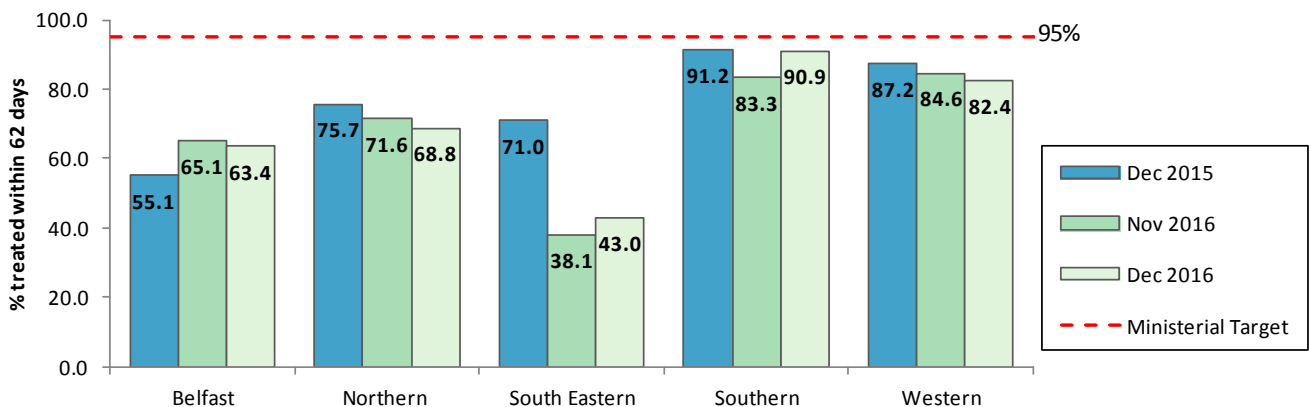
## Patients first treated following an urgent GP referral for Suspected Cancer



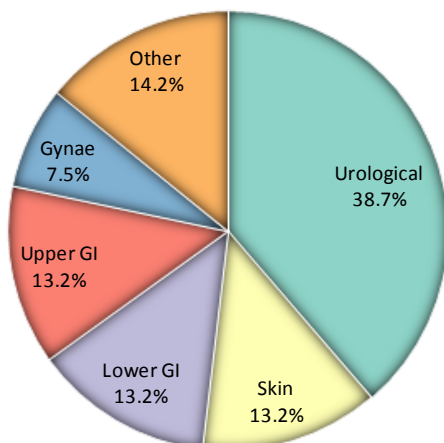
In December 2016, 338 patients commenced their first treatment for cancer following an urgent referral for suspect cancer, a decrease of 32 since December 2015 (Table 3).

For the same period the percentage treated within 62 days decreased from 72.2% (267 patients) in December 2015 to 68.6% (232 patients) in December 2016 (Table 3).

## Trust Performance



All HSC Trusts failed to meet the 62 day component of the Ministerial target during December 2016 (Table 1).



## Waits over 62 Days by Tumour Site

Of the 106 patients waiting longer than 62 days for treatment in December 2016, almost two fifths (41, 38.7%) were diagnosed with urological cancer. (Table 2).

# 31 Day Target

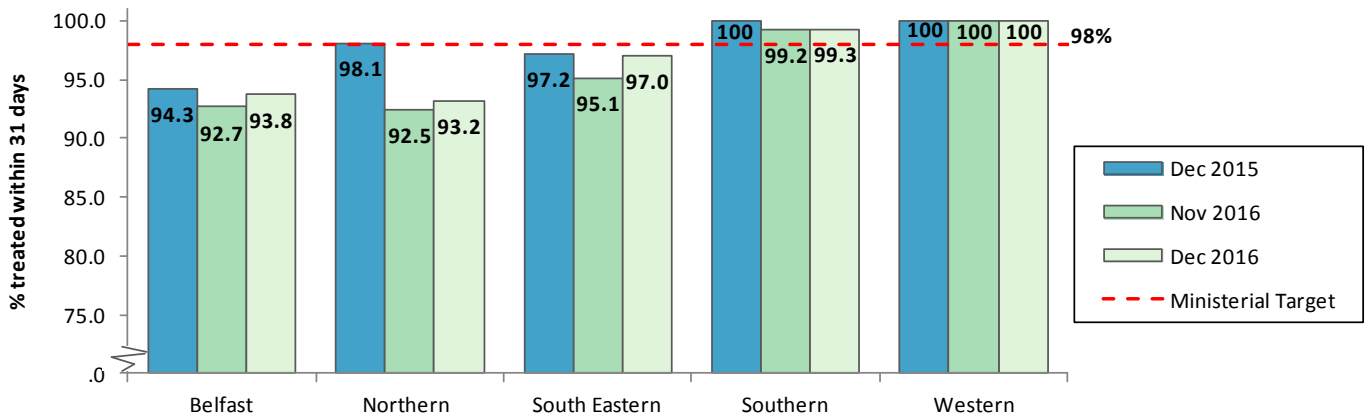
## No. of Patients first treated following a decision to treat



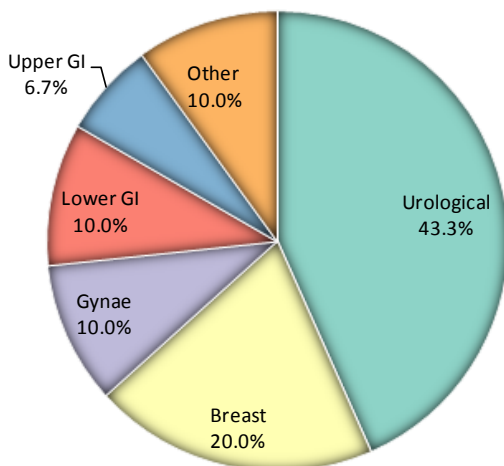
In December 2016, 791 patients commenced their first treatment for cancer following a decision to treat, a decrease of 29 since December 2015 (Table 6).

For the same period the percentage of patients treated within 31 days decreased from 97.0% (795 patients) in December 2015 to 96.2% (761 patients) in December 2016 (Table 6).

## Trust Performance



During December 2016, the Southern and Western HSC Trusts achieved the 98% Ministerial target, with the Western Trust 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).

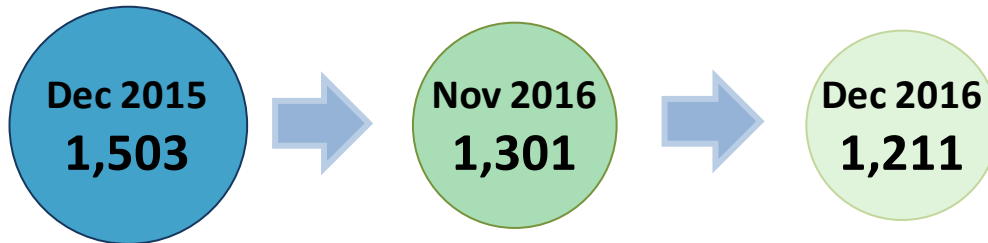


## Waits over 31 Days by Tumour Site

Of the 30 patients waiting longer than 31 days in December 2016, almost half (13, 43.3%) were diagnosed with urological cancer, and a fifth (6, 20%) were diagnosed with breast cancer (Table 5).

# 14 Day Target

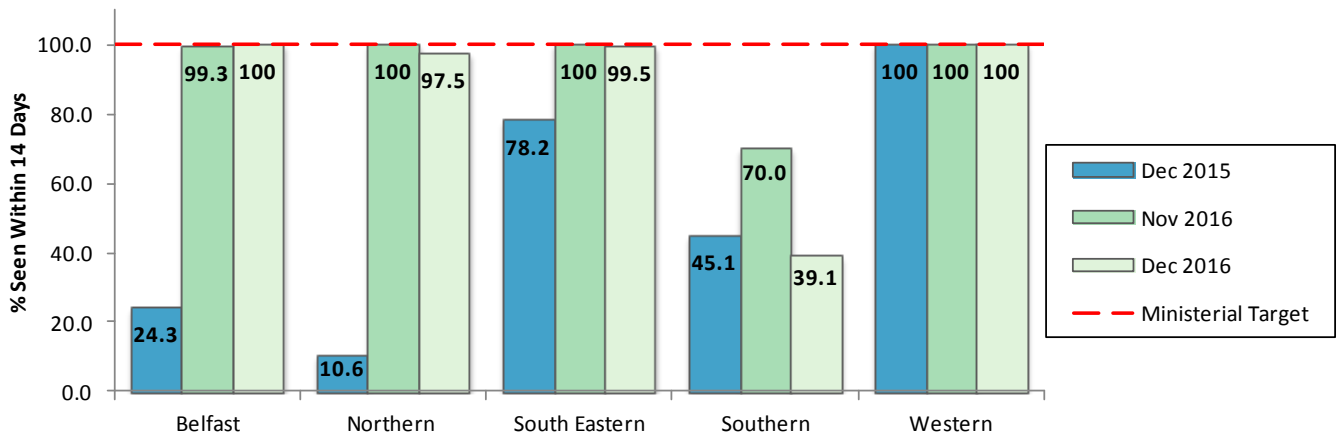
## No. of Patients first seen by a breast cancer specialist following an urgent referral for suspect cancer



In December 2016, 1,211 patients were first seen by a breast cancer specialist following an urgent referral for suspect breast cancer, a decrease of 292 since December 2015 (Table 8).

For the same period the percentage of patients first seen within 14 days increased from 49.5% (744 patients) in December 2015 to 91.4% (1,107 patients) in December 2016 (Table 8).

## Trust Performance



Across HSC Trusts, the Belfast and Western Trusts met the 14 Day Ministerial target during December 2016, with all patients seen within 14 days. The Northern, South Eastern and Southern Trusts failed to meet the target, with the South Eastern Trust falling just short of the target at 99.5% (Table 7).

## Additional Tables

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

	Total treated			Treated within 62 days from receipt of Referral			% treated within 62 days		
	Oct 2016	Nov 2016	Dec 2016	Oct 2016	Nov 2016	Dec 2016	Oct 2016	Nov 2016	Dec 2016
<b>HSC Trust</b>									
Belfast	128.5	119.0	93.0	76.5	77.5	59.0	59.5%	65.1%	63.4%
Northern	53.5	54.5	54.5	37.5	39.0	37.5	70.1%	71.6%	68.8%
South Eastern	57.5	77.5	67.5	19.5	29.5	29.0	33.9%	38.1%	43.0%
Southern	57.5	63.0	60.5	50.5	52.5	55.0	87.8%	83.3%	90.9%
Western	52.0	68.0	62.5	45.0	57.5	51.5	86.5%	84.6%	82.4%
<b>Northern Ireland</b>	<b>349</b>	<b>382</b>	<b>338</b>	<b>229</b>	<b>256</b>	<b>232</b>	<b>65.6%</b>	<b>67.0%</b>	<b>68.6%</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 (October – December 2016)<sup>3</sup>**

Cancer Type	Total treated			Treated within 62 days from receipt of Referral			% treated within 62 days		
	Oct 2016	Nov 2016	Dec 2016	Oct 2016	Nov 2016	Dec 2016	Oct 2016	Nov 2016	Dec 2016
Brain/ CNS	0	1	0	0	1	0	-	100.0%	-
Breast	65	82	67	64	81	66	98.5%	98.8%	98.5%
Gynae	29	31	19	18	20	11	62.1%	64.5%	57.9%
Haematological	17	12	12	14	11	8	82.4%	91.7%	66.7%
Head/Neck	16	18	12	11	11	7	68.8%	61.1%	58.3%
Lower GI	33	45	36	14	25	22	42.4%	55.6%	61.1%
Lung	25	22	21	18	15	17	72.0%	68.2%	81.0%
Sarcomas	1	1	1	1	0	1	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Skin	75	72	58	50	39	44	66.7%	54.2%	75.9%
Upper GI	13	21	20	7	8	6	53.8%	38.1%	30.0%
Urological	71	73	86	31	42	45	43.7%	57.5%	52.3%
Other	4	4	6	1	3	5	25.0%	75.0%	83.3%
<b>Northern Ireland</b>	<b>349</b>	<b>382</b>	<b>338</b>	<b>229</b>	<b>256</b>	<b>232</b>	<b>65.6%</b>	<b>67.0%</b>	<b>68.6%</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 (October 2015 – December 2016)<sup>4</sup>**

Month	Total Treated	Treated within 62 from receipt of referral	% treated within 62 days
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%
April 2016	329	225	68.4%
May 2016	331	229	69.2%
June 2016	386	277	71.8%
July 2016	314	221	70.4%
August 2016	369	248	67.2%
September 2016	365	232	63.6%
October 2016	349	229	65.6%
November 2016	382	256	67.0%
December 2016	338	232	68.6%

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 (October – December 2016)<sup>6</sup>**

HSC Trust	Total treated			Treated within 31 days of a decision to treat			% treated within 31 days		
	Oct 2016	Nov 2016	Dec 2016	Oct 2016	Nov 2016	Dec 2016	Oct 2016	Nov 2016	Dec 2016
Belfast	343	354	304	317	328	285	92.4%	92.7%	93.8%
Northern	77	93	88	73	86	82	94.8%	92.5%	93.2%
South Eastern	117	144	135	106	137	131	90.6%	95.1%	97.0%
Southern	124	128	141	120	127	140	96.8%	99.2%	99.3%
Western	132	146	123	132	146	123	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
<b>Northern Ireland</b>	<b>793</b>	<b>865</b>	<b>791</b>	<b>748</b>	<b>824</b>	<b>761</b>	<b>94.3%</b>	<b>95.3%</b>	<b>96.2%</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, for all cancers, in Northern Ireland by tumour site (October – December 2016)<sup>7</sup>**

Cancer Type	Total treated			Treated within 31 days of a decision to treat			% treated within 31 days		
	Oct 2016	Nov 2016	Dec 2016	Oct 2016	Nov 2016	Dec 2016	Oct 2016	Nov 2016	Dec 2016
Brain/ CNS	13	14	9	13	14	9	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Breast	122	139	122	114	133	116	93.4%	95.7%	95.1%
Gynae	50	54	43	46	51	40	92.0%	94.4%	93.0%
Haematological	59	71	61	59	71	61	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Head/Neck	31	33	26	30	32	25	96.8%	97.0%	96.2%
Lower GI	86	103	91	86	102	88	100.0%	99.0%	96.7%
Lung	106	86	97	102	82	96	96.2%	95.3%	99.0%
Sarcomas	3	1	1	3	1	1	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Skin	128	136	118	118	128	117	92.2%	94.1%	99.2%
Upper GI	52	73	57	51	71	55	98.1%	97.3%	96.5%
Urological	124	134	150	107	119	137	86.3%	88.8%	91.3%
Other	19	21	16	19	20	16	100.0%	95.2%	100.0%
<b>Northern Ireland</b>	<b>793</b>	<b>865</b>	<b>791</b>	<b>748</b>	<b>824</b>	<b>761</b>	<b>94.3%</b>	<b>95.3%</b>	<b>96.2%</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 (October 2015 – December 2016)<sup>6</sup>**

Month	Total treated	Treated within 31 days of a decision to treat	% treated within 31 days
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%
April 2016	795	731	91.9%
May 2016	764	715	93.6%
June 2016	854	794	93.0%
July 2016	727	678	93.3%
August 2016	821	775	94.4%
September 2016	809	758	93.7%
October 2016	793	748	94.3%
November 2016	865	824	95.3%
December 2016	791	761	96.2%

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 (October – December 2016)<sup>9</sup>**

HSC Trust	Total seen			Waited 14 days or less			% seen within 14 days		
	Oct 2016	Nov 2016	Dec 2016	Oct 2016	Nov 2016	Dec 2016	Oct 2016	Nov 2016	Dec 2016
Belfast	320	292	274	316	290	274	98.8%	99.3%	100.0%
Northern	300	277	316	300	277	308	100.0%	100.0%	97.5%
South Eastern	188	218	206	188	218	205	100.0%	100.0%	99.5%
Southern	219	230	156	215	161	61	98.2%	70.0%	39.1%
Western	263	284	259	263	284	259	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
<b>Northern Ireland</b>	<b>1,290</b>	<b>1,301</b>	<b>1,211</b>	<b>1,282</b>	<b>1,230</b>	<b>1,107</b>	<b>99.4%</b>	<b>94.5%</b>	<b>91.4%</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 (October 2015 – December 2016)<sup>9,10</sup>**

Month	Total seen	Waited 14 days or less	% seen within 14 days
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%
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%

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 2016/17 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. 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 January, February and March 2017 will be published on Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> June 2017.
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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