

INFORMATION
ANALYSIS
DIRECTORATE



Northern Ireland Waiting Time Statistics: Diagnostic Waiting Times Quarter Ending June 2014



Department of
**Health, Social Services
and Public Safety**

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Reader Information

Purpose	This publication presents information on waiting times for diagnostic services in Northern Ireland at 30 th June 2014 and diagnostic reporting times during the quarter ending 30 th June 2014. It details information on the number of patients waiting, and length of time waiting, for diagnostic services, as well as diagnostic reporting times at Health and Social Care (HSC) Trusts in Northern Ireland. This information reports on performance against the 2014/15 Ministerial diagnostic target which states that, from April 2014, no patient should wait longer than nine weeks for a diagnostic test and all urgent diagnostic tests should be reported on within 2 days of the test being undertaken. Data is presented by HSC Trust, diagnostic service and time band.
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Target audience	DHSSPS, Chief Executives of the HSC Board and Trusts in Northern Ireland, health care professionals, academics, Health & Social Care stakeholders, the media and general public.
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Key Points

- At 30th June 2014, there were 72,779 patients waiting for a diagnostic service at HSC Trusts in Northern Ireland. This represents an increase of 5.4% (3,748) compared with the previous quarter and an increase of 7.0% (4,784) compared to the same time last year (Figure 1 & Table 1a).
- Of the 72,779 patients waiting, 57.0% (41,483) were waiting for an Imaging Service, 26.3% (19,109) were waiting for a Physiological Measurement test and 16.7% (12,187) were waiting for a Day Case Endoscopy (Figure 2 & Table 1b).
- Of the 72,779 patients waiting for a diagnostic service, 1 in 4 are waiting for a Non-obstetric Ultrasound (16,934, 23.3%) (Figure 3 & Table 3).
- There were 14,234 (19.6%) patients waiting longer than 9 weeks, an increase of 3,755 (35.8%) on the corresponding number for the previous quarter (10,479) (Figure 6 & Tables 2, 3 & 4).
- There were 134,165 completed diagnostic reports verified and dispatched to the referring clinician in Northern Ireland during the quarter ending June 2014, an increase of 2.0% (2,581) on the 131,584 reported in the previous quarter (Figure 11 & Table 5).
- All Trusts reported on at least 88.7% of all urgent diagnostic tests within two days. Each Trust managed to report on at least 89.5% of all routine tests within two weeks. In Northern Ireland as a whole, 99.3% of all routine tests were reported on within four weeks (Figure 16 & Table 10).

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About the Hospital Information Branch (HIB)

Hospital Information Branch is responsible for the collection, quality assurance, analysis and publication of timely and accurate information derived from a wide range of statistical information returns supplied by the Health & Social Care (HSC) Trusts and the HSC Board. Statistical information is collected routinely from a variety of electronic patient level administrative systems and pre-defined EXCEL survey return templates.

The Branch aims to present information in a meaningful way and provide advice on its uses to customers in the HSC Committee, Professional Advisory Groups, policy branches within the DHSSPS, other Health organisations, academia, private sector organisations, charity/voluntary organisations as well as the general public. The statistical information collected is used to contribute to major exercises such as reporting on the performance of the HSC system, other comparative performance exercises, target setting and monitoring, development of service frameworks as well as policy formulation and evaluation. In addition, the information is used in response to a significantly high volume of Parliamentary/Assembly questions and ad-hoc queries each year.

Information is disseminated through a number of key statistical publications, including: Inpatient Activity, Outpatient Activity, Emergency Care, Mental Health & Learning Disability and Waiting Time Statistics (Inpatient, Outpatient, Diagnostics and Cancer). A detailed list of these publications is available from:

Website: http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/stats_research/hospital-stats.htm

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Technical Notes

This statistics release is a quarterly data series presenting information on waiting times and reporting times for diagnostic services at HSC Trusts in Northern Ireland. Prior to the Quarter Ending (QE) December 2010, the information on the number of patients waiting for a diagnostic service and the length of time they were waiting at the end of each quarter was included within the NI Waiting List publication. This publication has now been discontinued.

Data Collection

The information presented in this bulletin derives from a series of statistical returns (listed below) provided by HSC Trusts and the HSC Board.

- Statutory Data Return 1 (SDR1), Parts 1 and 2, and Diagnostic Reporting Turnaround Time Return (DRTT)

Data providers are supplied with technical guidance documents outlining the methodologies that should be used in the collection, reporting and validation of each of these data returns. These documents can be accessed at the following link:

http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/stats_research/hospital-stats/hib_guidance_manuals.htm

Rounding

Percentages have been rounded to one decimal place and, as a consequence, some percentages may not sum to 100.

On occasion, the percentage of patients waiting within overall totals or percentage changes between quarters, are presented. In some instances, these percentages are less than 0.1% or more than 99.9%. Users should be aware that in such cases, the percentage is rounded to zero or 100%.

Data Quality

Information provided by HSC Trusts that is presented in this bulletin has been validated and quality assured by HSC Trusts prior to publication.

HSC Trusts are given a set period of time to submit the information to HIB. Following submission, HIB perform a series of checks to verify that information is consistent both within and across returns. Trend analyses are used to monitor annual variations and emerging trends. Queries arising from validation checks are presented to HSC Trusts for clarification and if required, returns may be amended and/or re-submitted.

Data provided by the HSC Board on the SDR1 Part 2 and the DRTT returns are not validated by the Department.

Data contained within this publication are not National Statistics.

Main Uses of Data

Data contained in this release are published primarily to provide an indication of HSC performance. They allow the general public and the DHSSPS Health Committee to assess the performance of the DHSSPS, the HSC Board and HSC Trusts in providing timely access to hospital services in Northern Ireland. These data also provide policy makers with the necessary information to formulate and evaluate health services and are helpful in assessing the effectiveness of resource allocation in providing services that are fully responsive to patient needs. Additionally, hospital waiting time information is used to inform the media, special interest groups and academics, and by the DHSSPS to respond to parliamentary/assembly questions and ad hoc queries from the public. An additional aim of this publication is to make waiting times information publicly available to those people using health services in Northern Ireland.

Waiting Time Information Elsewhere in the United Kingdom

While it is our intention to direct users to waiting time information elsewhere in the UK, users should be aware that hospital waiting times in other administrations are not always measured in a comparable manner to those in Northern Ireland. Details of the hospital waiting times published elsewhere in the UK can be found as detailed below.

England

<http://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/statistical-work-areas/diagnostics-waiting-times-and-activity/>

Scotland

<http://www.isdscotland.org/Health-Topics/Waiting-Times/Publications/>

Wales

<http://wales.gov.uk/statistics-and-research/nhs-diagnostic-therapy-service-waiting-times/?lang=en>

Contact Information

As we want to engage with users of our statistics, we invite you to feedback your comments on this publication to:

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Introduction

The information detailed in this release is published primarily to provide an indication of HSC Trust performance. They allow the general public and the DHSSPS Health Committee to assess the performance of the DHSSPS, the HSC Board and HSC Trusts in providing timely access to hospital services in Northern Ireland.

Data contained in this publication relates to waiting times for diagnostic services and the diagnostic reporting turnaround times at HSC Trusts in Northern Ireland at 30th June 2014 and during the quarter ending (QE) June 2014, respectively.

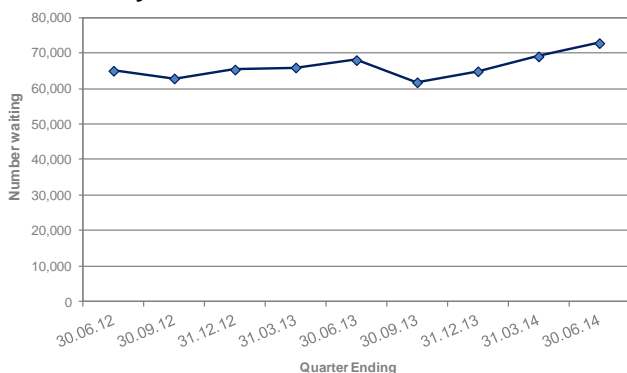
Waiting Times for Diagnostic Services

A diagnostic service provides an examination, test or procedure used to identify a person's disease or condition and which allows a medical diagnosis to be made.

Total patients waiting¹

The number of patients waiting for a diagnostic service at hospitals in Northern Ireland at 30th June 2014 was 72,779. This represents an increase of 3,748 (5.4%) on the number waiting at 31st March 2014 (69,031) and 4,784 (7.0%) more than at 30th June 2013 (67,995) (Figure 1 & Table 1a).

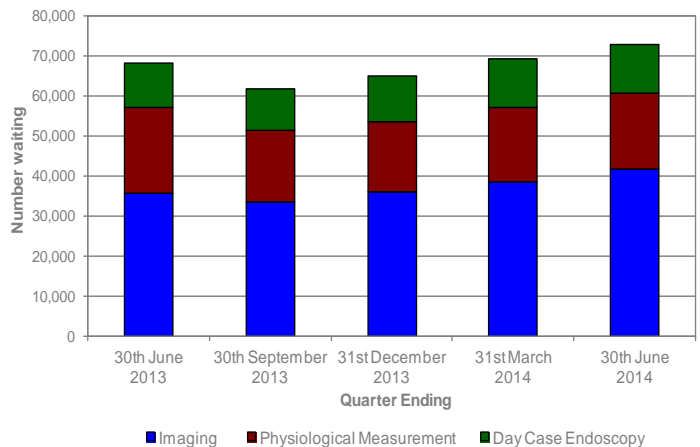
Figure 1: Total number of patients waiting: Quarterly trends 30th June 2012 to 30th June 2014



Total patients waiting by Diagnostic category¹

Of the 72,779 patients waiting, 57.0% (41,483) were waiting for an Imaging Service, 26.3% (19,109) were waiting for a Physiological Measurement test and 16.7% (12,187) were waiting for a Day Case Endoscopy (Figure 2 & Table 1b).

Figure 2: Total number of patients waiting by category of service: Quarterly trends 30th June 2013 to 30th June 2014



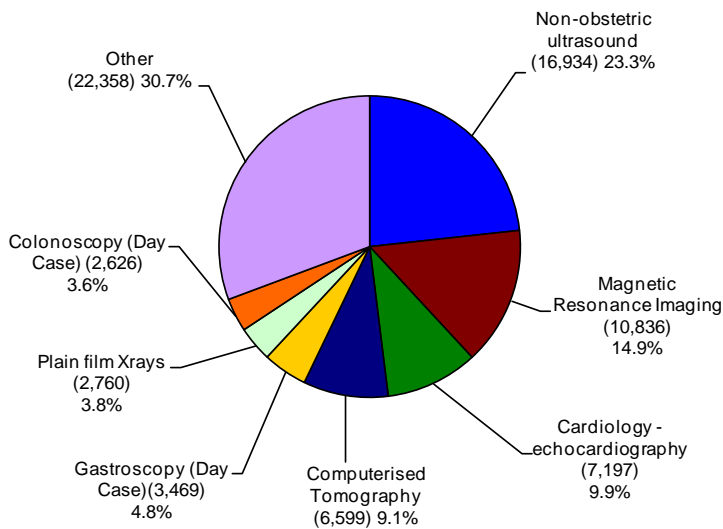
Total patients waiting by Diagnostic service²

Over two thirds (69.3%, 50,421) of the 72,779 patients waiting for a diagnostic service were within one of the following seven diagnostic services: Non-obstetric Ultrasound; Magnetic Resonance Imaging; Echocardiography; Computerised Tomography; Gastroscopy (Day Case); Plain Film Xrays; and Colonoscopy (Day Case) (Figure 3 & Table 3).

¹ Refer to Explanatory Notes 1-10 , 14 & 17

² Refer to Explanatory Notes 1-10 & 14

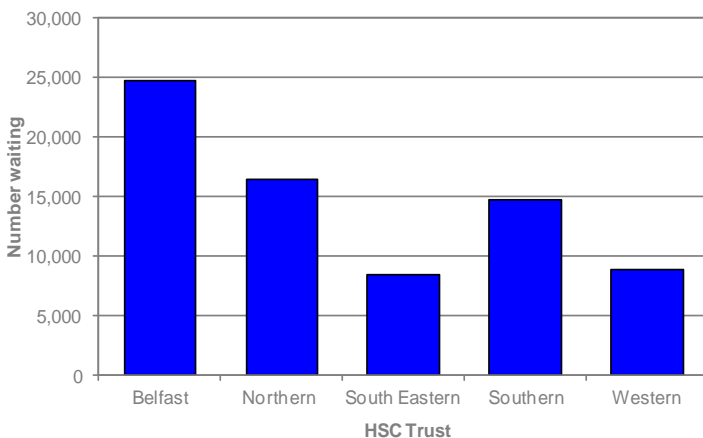
Figure 3: Total number of patients waiting by diagnostic service at 30th June 2014



Total patients waiting by HSC Trust²

Just over a third (33.9%, 24,703) of patients waiting for a diagnostic service were waiting in the Belfast HSC Trust. A further 22.4% (16,320) were waiting in the Northern HSC Trust, 20.1% (14,600) in the Southern HSC Trust, 12.1% (8,828) in the Western HSC Trust and 11.4% (8,328) in the South Eastern HSC Trust (Figure 4 & Table 4).

Figure 4: Total number of patients waiting by HSC Trust at 30th June 2014



² Refer to Explanatory Notes 1-10 & 14

Data users should be aware that many diagnostic services are not provided at each of the five HSC Trusts in Northern Ireland. In this situation, patients from one HSC Trust area will be waiting to be seen at a service provided at another HSC Trust. It is therefore not possible to accurately calculate the number of patients waiting per head of the population in any specific HSC Trust area, as HSC Trusts that provide services for the whole of Northern Ireland will have a higher number of patients waiting per head of the population, than those that provide more localised services.

Performance against the 2014/15 maximum waiting time target³

The 2014/15 Ministerial diagnostic waiting time target states that, from April 2014, no patient should wait longer than nine weeks for a diagnostic test.

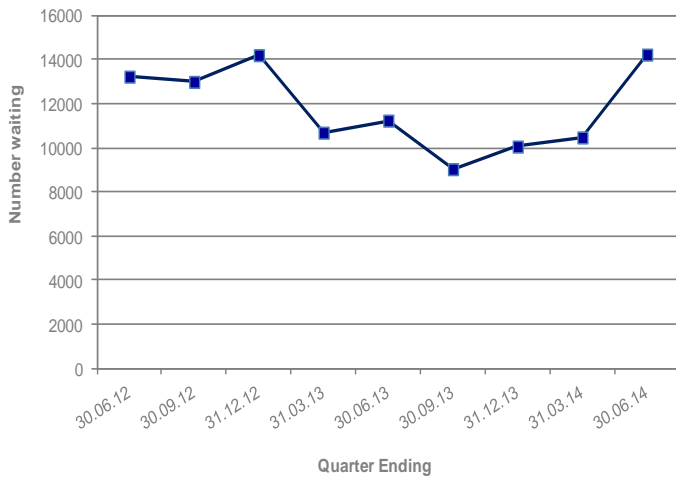
Figure 5: HSC Trust performance against the 2014/15 waiting time target for diagnostic tests

HSC Trust	Target Achieved?
	No patient waiting longer than nine weeks
Belfast	No
Northern	No
South Eastern	No
Southern	No
Western	No
Northern Ireland	No

At the end of June 2014, Northern Ireland as a whole did not meet this target (Figure 5). At 30th June 2014, there were 14,234 (19.6%) patients waiting longer than the 9 weeks target. This represents an increase of 3,755 (35.8%) on the number exceeding this waiting time at 31st March 2014 (10,479), and an increase of 2,993 (26.6%) on the position at 30th June 2013 (11,241) (Figure 6 & Table 2).

³ Refer to Explanatory Notes 1-10, 14-15 & 17

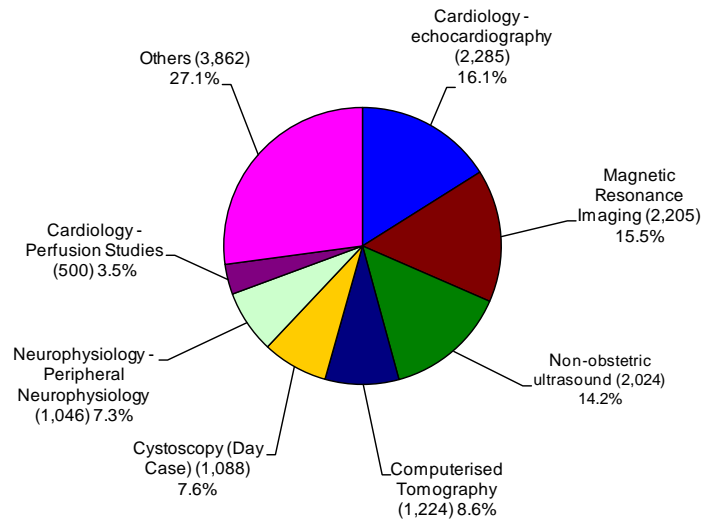
Figure 6: Number of patients waiting longer than 9 weeks: Quarterly trends 30th June 2012 to 30th June 2014



Patients waiting longer than the 2014/15 maximum waiting time target by Diagnostic service⁴

Over two thirds (72.9%, 10,372) of the 14,234 patients waiting more than nine weeks were waiting for one of the following seven diagnostic services: Echocardiography; Magnetic Resonance Imaging; Non-obstetric Ultrasound; Computerised Tomography; Cystoscopy (Day Case); Neurophysiology; and Perfusion Studies (Figure 7 & Table 3).

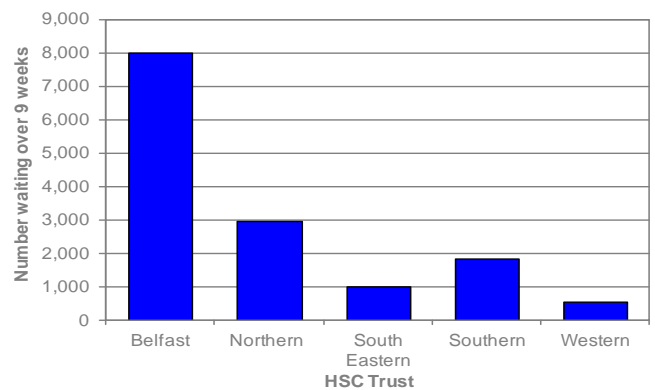
Figure 7: Number of patients waiting longer than 9 weeks by diagnostic service at 30th June 2014



Patients waiting longer than the 2014/15 maximum waiting time target by HSC Trust⁴

Of the 14,234 patients waiting longer than nine weeks for a diagnostic service, 56.0% (7,968) were waiting in the Belfast HSC Trust, 20.7% (2,942) in the Northern HSC Trust, 12.8% (1,822) in the Southern HSC Trust, 6.9% (976) in the South Eastern HSC Trust, and 3.7% (526) in the Western HSC Trust (Figure 8 & Table 4).

Figure 8: Number of patients waiting longer than 9 weeks by HSC Trust at 30th June 2014

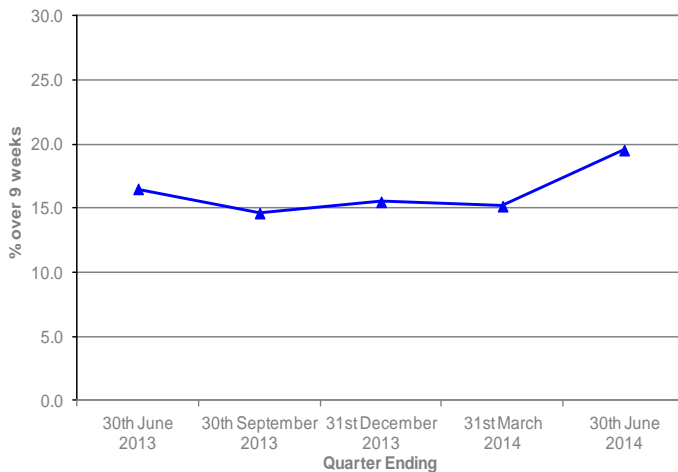


⁴ Refer to Explanatory Notes 1-10 & 14-15

Proportion of patients waiting longer than the 2014/15 maximum waiting time target³

At the end of June 2014, 19.6% (14,234) of patients were waiting more than 9 weeks for a diagnostic service, compared with 15.2% (10,479) at the end of March 2014 and 16.5% (11,241) at the end of June 2013 (Figure 9 & Tables 1a & 2).

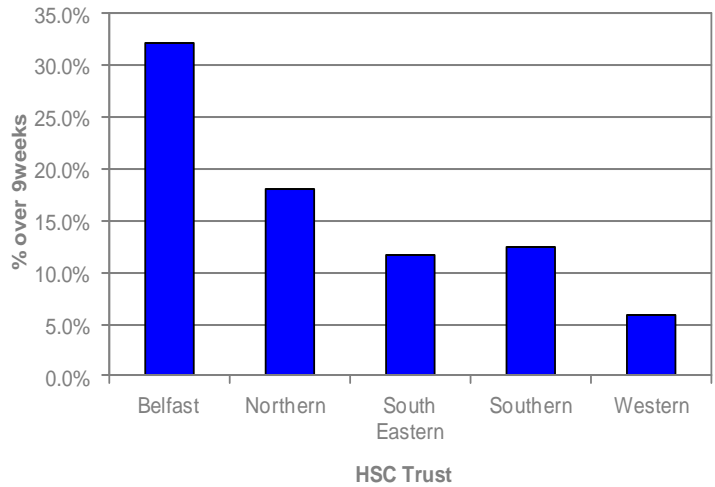
Figure 9: Proportion of patients waiting longer than 9 weeks: Quarterly trends 30th June 2013 to 30th June 2014



At 30th June 2014, 32.3% (7,968 out of 24,703) of patients at the Belfast HSC Trust were waiting longer than 9 weeks for a diagnostic service. The comparable proportion at the Northern HSC Trust was 18.0% (2,942 out of 16,320), 12.5% (1,822 out of 14,600) at the Southern HSC Trust, 11.7% (976 out of 8,328) at the South Eastern HSC Trust and 6.0% (526 out of 8,828) at the Western HSC Trust (Figure 10 & Table 4).

³ Refer to Explanatory Notes 1-10, 14 -15 & 17

Figure 10: Proportion of patients waiting longer than 9 weeks in each HSC Trust at 30th June 2014



Diagnostic Reporting Times

The diagnostic reporting turnaround time is the length of time between the diagnostic test being undertaken and the results being verified and dispatched to the referring clinician.

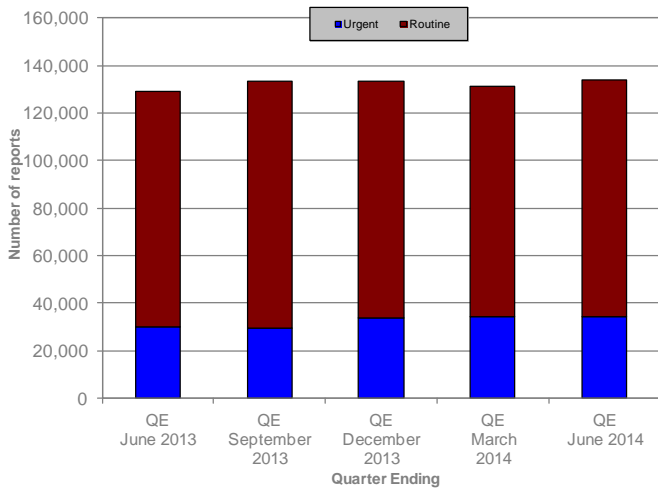
It should be noted that diagnostic reporting turnaround times relate only to a selected subset of imaging and physiological measurement test. Day case endoscopies are reported on the day of the test and as such are not included.

Total completed diagnostic reports⁵

The total number of diagnostic reports verified and dispatched to the referring clinician in Northern Ireland during the quarter ending June 2014 was 134,165. This represents an increase of 2,581 (2.0%) on the number of completed reports during the quarter ending March 2014 (131,584), and an increase of 4,980 (3.9%) on the number completed during the quarter ending June 2013 (129,185) (Figure 11 & Table 5).

⁵ Refer to Explanatory Notes 1-4 & 11-14

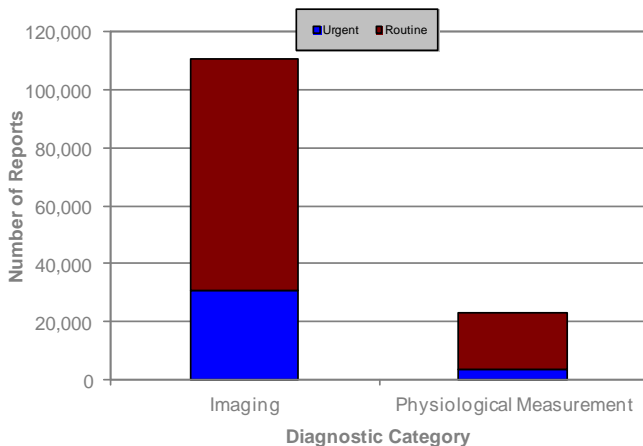
Figure 11: Number of completed diagnostic reports by priority: Quarterly trends QE June 2013 - QE June 2014



Diagnostic reports by diagnostic category⁵

Of the 134,165 completed diagnostic test reports, 110,839 (82.6%) were as the result of an Imaging test and 23,326 (17.4%) were reporting on a Physiological Measurement test (Figure 12 & Tables 6 & 7).

Figure 12: Number of completed diagnostic reports by category and priority during QE June 2014

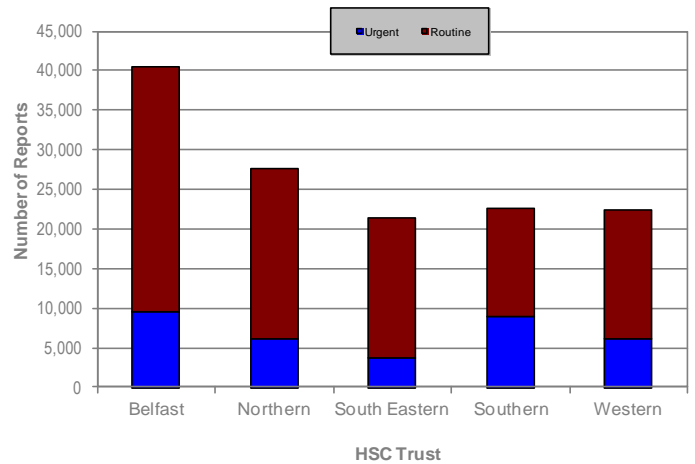


⁵ Refer to Explanatory Notes 1-4 & 11-14

Diagnostic reports by HSC Trust⁵

A total of 30.2% (40,451) of diagnostic reports were completed in the Belfast HSC Trust, with 20.5% (27,517) completed in the Northern HSC Trust, 16.8% (22,488) in the Southern HSC Trust, 16.7% (22,402) in the Western HSC Trust and 15.9% (21,307) in the South Eastern HSC Trust (Figure 13 & Tables 8 & 9).

Figure 13: Number of completed diagnostic reports by HSC Trust and priority during QE June 2014



2014/15 Diagnostic reporting time target⁶

The Ministerial target for diagnostic reporting times states that, from April 2014, all urgent diagnostic tests should be reported on within two days of the test being undertaken. This means that 100% of urgent diagnostic tests subject to the target should be reported on within two days.

⁶ Refer to Explanatory Notes 1-4 & 11-15

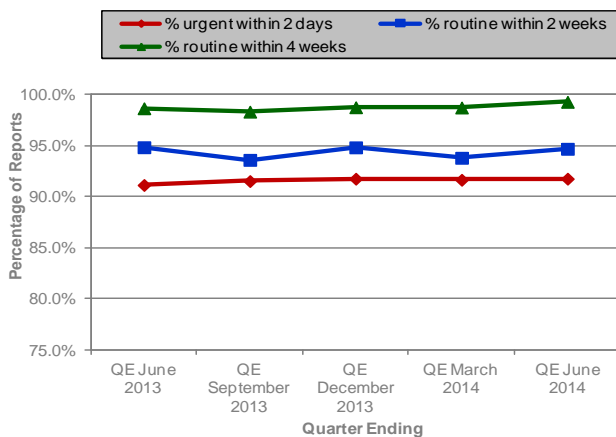
Figure 14: HSC Trust performance against the 2014/15 reporting time target

HSC Trust	Target Achieved?
	Ministerial Target: All urgent diagnostic tests reported on within 2 days
Belfast	No
Northern	No
South Eastern	No
Southern	No
Western	No
Northern Ireland	No

During the quarter ending June 2014, Northern Ireland as whole did not meet this target (Figure 14). There were 34,520 urgent diagnostic tests reported on, of which 91.8% (31,684) were reported on within 2 days. This is an increase of 0.1 percentage points compared with the previous quarter (91.7%) (Figure 15 & Table 11).

Compared with the same quarter of the previous year, the percentage of urgent diagnostic tests reported on within two days increased by 0.6 percentage points, from 91.2% to 91.8% (Figure 15 & Table 11).

Figure 15: Percentage of diagnostic tests reported within 2 days/2weeks/4weeks: Quarterly trends QE June 2013 - QE June 2014



Performance against target by Diagnostic category⁶

Of the 34,520 urgent diagnostic tests reported on during the quarter ending June 2014, 31,000 were imaging and 3,520 were physiological measurement. A total of 91.3% of urgent imaging tests were reported on within 2 days, compared to 96.1% of urgent physiological measurement tests reported on within two days (Table 6).

Performance against target across Trusts⁶

Although no Trust managed to report on 100% of urgent diagnostic tests within 2 days, all Trusts did manage to report on at least 88.7%, with the Northern HSC Trust reporting on 97.8% (Figure 16 & Table 10).

2014/15 Diagnostic reporting time indicators of performance⁷

The 2014/15 Ministerial indicators of performance for diagnostic reporting times refer to (i) the percentage of routine diagnostic tests reported on within 2 weeks of the test being undertaken, and (ii) the percentage of routine diagnostic tests reported on within 4 weeks of the test being undertaken.

During the quarter ending June 2014, there were a total of 99,645 completed routine diagnostic tests, of which 94,380 (94.7%) were reported on within two weeks (Table 7).

A further 4,589 (4.6%) routine tests were reported on within two to four weeks, giving a total of 98,969 (99.3%) reported on within four weeks. It took more than four weeks to report on 676 (0.7%) of these routine diagnostic tests (Tables 7 & 9).

Compared with the previous quarter, the percentage of routine diagnostic tests reported on within two weeks increased by 0.9 percentage points, from 93.8% to 94.7%.

⁶ Refer to Explanatory Notes 1-4 & 11-15

⁷ Refer to Explanatory Notes 1-4, 11-14 & 16

Compared with the same quarter of the previous year, the percentage of routine diagnostic tests reported on within two weeks fell by 0.2 percentage points, from 94.9% to 94.7% (Figure 15 & Table 11).

The percentage of routine diagnostic tests reported on within four weeks increased by 0.5 percentage points, from 98.8% to 99.3%, compared with the previous quarter, and increased by 0.6 percentage points, from 98.7% to 99.3%, when compared with the same quarter of the previous year (Figure 15 & Table 11).

Indicators of performance by Diagnostic category⁷

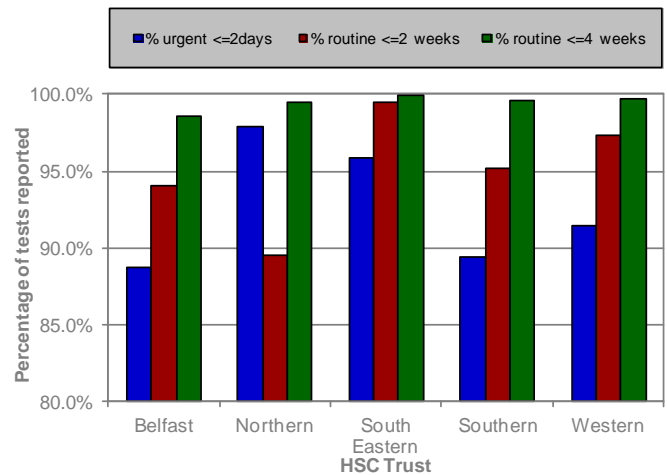
Of the 99,645 routine diagnostic tests reported on during the quarter ending June 2014, 79,839 were imaging, while 19,806 were physiological measurement. A total of 94.2% of routine imaging tests were reported on within 2 weeks, compared to 96.6% of routine physiological measurement tests (Table 7).

A total of 99.2% of routine imaging tests were reported on within 4 weeks, compared to 99.7% of routine physiological measurement tests (Table 7).

Indicators of performance by Trust⁷

All Trusts managed to report on at least 89.5% of routine diagnostic tests within two weeks, with the South Eastern Trust reporting on 99.5% of routine diagnostic tests within two weeks. All Trusts managed to report on at least 98.5% of routine diagnostic tests within four weeks, with the South Eastern Trust reporting on 100% of routine tests within four weeks (Figure 16 & Table 10).

Figure 16: Percentage of diagnostic tests reported within 2 days/2weeks/4weeks by HSC Trust during QE June 2014



⁷ Refer to Explanatory Notes 1-4, 11-14 & 16

Waiting times for Diagnostic Tests

Table 1a: Number of patients waiting for a diagnostic service - 30th June 2014¹

Total Waiting :	Number of patients waiting: 30th June 2014	Change compared with the end of the previous quarter	Change compared with the same quarter previous year
16 Selected Services	60,650	+3,777	+5,608
Other Services	12,129	-29	-824
Total	72,779	+3,748	+4,784

Source: Departmental Return SDR 1 (Parts 1 & 2)

¹Refer to Explanatory Notes 1-10, 14 & 17

Table 1b: Number of patients waiting for a diagnostic service by category - 30th June 2014²

Diagnostic Service Category	Number of patients waiting for one of the 16 selected services - 30th June 2014	Number of patients waiting for one of the other diagnostic services - 30th June 2014	Total waiting for a diagnostic service - 30th June 2014
Imaging (excluding Interventional Imaging)	37,226	4,257	41,483
Physiological Measurement	13,655	5,454	19,109
Endoscopy (Day Case)	9,769	2,418	12,187
Total waiting for diagnostic tests	60,650	12,129	72,779

Source: Departmental Return SDR 1 (Parts 1 & 2)

²Refer to Explanatory Notes 1-10 & 14

Table 2: Number of patients waiting longer than 9 weeks for a diagnostic service - 30th June 2014³

Waiting more than 9 weeks for:	Number of patients waiting: 30th June 2014	Change compared with the end of the previous quarter	Change compared with the same quarter previous year
16 Selected Services	12,375	+3,760	+3,380
Other Services	1,859	-5	-387
Total	14,234	+3,755	+2,993

Source: Departmental Return SDR 1 (Parts 1 & 2)

³Refer to Explanatory Notes 1-10, 14-15 & 17

Table 3: Number of patients waiting for a diagnostic service, by type of service and weeks waiting - 30th June 2014⁴

Diagnostic Test	Patients Waiting for a Diagnostic Test by Weeks Waiting						Total Waiting
	0 - 6	>6 - 9	>9 - 13	>13 - 21	>21 - 26	>26	
Non-obstetric ultrasound	11,580	3,330	1,343	595	67	19	16,934
Magnetic Resonance Imaging	6,773	1,858	1,232	648	166	159	10,836
Cardiology - echocardiography	3,579	1,333	1,061	1,007	98	119	7,197
Computerised Tomography	4,432	943	525	663	35	1	6,599
Gastroscopy (Day Case)	2,457	596	287	115	9	5	3,469
Plain Film Xrays	2,698	61	1	0	0	0	2,760
Colonoscopy (Day Case)	1,751	464	259	131	17	4	2,626
Audiology - pure tone audiometry	1,511	461	234	250	0	0	2,456
Cystoscopy (Day Case)	974	240	192	298	153	445	2,302
Ambulatory ECG monitoring (24 hr holter)	1,678	345	51	8	15	0	2,097
DEXA Scan	1,451	342	254	26	0	0	2,073
Neurophysiology - peripheral neurophysiology	587	215	355	619	63	9	1,848
Flexi sigmoidoscopy (Day Case)	926	248	129	58	11	0	1,372
Fluroscopy	864	178	96	110	63	50	1,361
Cardiology - perfusion studies	339	150	170	254	56	20	989
Exercise tolerance testing	648	103	36	20	13	11	831
Hysteroscopy	464	102	94	101	24	10	795
Arthroscopy	120	108	92	215	109	81	725
Respiratory physiology - sleep studies	420	135	48	13	0	0	616
Radio-Nuclide Imaging	540	31	0	0	0	0	571
Other	2,995	515	281	264	94	173	4,322
Total waiting for diagnostic tests	46,787	11,758	6,740	5,395	993	1,106	72,779

Source: Departmental Return SDR 1 (Parts 1 & 2)

⁴Refer to Explanatory Notes 1-10 & 14-15

Table 4: Number of patients waiting for a diagnostic service, by HSC Trust - 30th June 2014⁴

HSC Trust	All patients waiting for a diagnostic service by HSC Trust and weeks waiting: 30th June 2014						Total Waiting
	0 - 6	>6 - 9	>9 - 13	>13 - 21	> 21 - 26	>26	
Belfast	13,025	3,710	2,905	3,514	743	806	24,703
Northern	10,516	2,862	1,678	1,109	107	48	16,320
South Eastern	6,281	1,071	607	300	30	39	8,328
Southern	9,822	2,956	1,294	287	76	165	14,600
Western	7,143	1,159	256	185	37	48	8,828
Total	46,787	11,758	6,740	5,395	993	1,106	72,779
Total waiting more than nine weeks:							14,234

Source: Departmental Return SDR 1 (Parts 1 & 2)

⁴Refer to Explanatory Notes 1-10 & 14-15

Diagnostic Reporting Times

Table 5: Number of completed diagnostic reports by priority – QE June 2014⁵

Priority of Report	QE June 2014	Change compared with previous quarter	Change compared with the same quarter previous year
Urgent Reports	34,520	+123	+4,254
Routine Reports	99,645	+2,458	+726
Total Reports	134,165	+2,581	+4,980

Source: Departmental Return DRTT

⁵Refer to Explanatory Notes 1-4 & 11-14

Table 6: Number of completed urgent diagnostic reports by category – QE June 2014⁶

Category of test	Length of time reporting in days				Total Completed
	0 - 2 days	>2 - 14 days	>14 - 28 days	>28 days	
Imaging	28,302	2,533	138	27	31,000
Physiological Measurement	3,382	123	14	1	3,520
Total	31,684	2,656	152	28	34,520
0 - 2 days:	31,684 (91.8%)				
> 2 days:	2,836 (8.2%)				

Source: Departmental Return DRTT

⁶Refer to Explanatory Notes 1-4 & 11-15

Table 7: Number of completed routine diagnostic reports by category – QE June 2014⁷

Category of test	Length of time reporting in weeks			Total Completed
	0 - 2 weeks	>2 - 4 weeks	>4 weeks	
Imaging	75,239	3,987	613	79,839
Physiological Measurement	19,141	602	63	19,806
Total	94,380	4,589	676	99,645
0 - 2 weeks:	94,380 (94.7%)			
>2 - 4 weeks:	4,589 (4.6%)			
>4 weeks:	676 (0.7%)			

Source: Departmental Return DRTT

⁷Refer to Explanatory Notes 1-4, 11-14 & 16

Table 8: Number of completed urgent diagnostic reports by HSC Trust and time in days – QE June 2014⁶

HSC Trust	Length of time reporting in days				Total Completed
	0 - 2 days	>2 - 14 days	>14 - 28 days	>28 days	
Belfast	8,481	957	104	21	9,563
Northern	6,035	129	4	0	6,168
South Eastern	3,540	150	2	0	3,692
Southern	8,036	924	20	5	8,985
Western	5,592	496	22	2	6,112
Total	31,684	2,656	152	28	34,520

Source: Departmental Return DRTT

⁶Refer to Explanatory Notes 1-4 & 11-15

Table 9: Number of completed routine diagnostic reports by HSC Trust and time in weeks – QE June 2014⁷

HSC Trust	Length of time reporting in weeks			Total Completed
	0 - 2 weeks	>2 - 4 weeks	>4 weeks	
Belfast	29,049	1,388	451	30,888
Northern	19,112	2,121	116	21,349
South Eastern	17,524	86	5	17,615
Southern	12,847	596	60	13,503
Western	15,848	398	44	16,290
Total	94,380	4,589	676	99,645

Source: Departmental Return DRTT

⁷Refer to Explanatory Notes 1-4, 11-14 & 16

Table 10: Percentage of completed reports achieved – QE June 2014⁸

HSC Trust	Percentage achieved		
	Percentage of urgent diagnostic tests reported on within two days	Percentage of routine tests reported on within two weeks	Percentage of routine tests reported on within four weeks
Belfast	88.7%	94.0%	98.5%
Northern	97.8%	89.5%	99.5%
South Eastern	95.9%	99.5%	100.0%
Southern	89.4%	95.1%	99.6%
Western	91.5%	97.3%	99.7%
Northern Ireland	91.8%	94.7%	99.3%

Source: Departmental Return DRTT

⁸Refer to Explanatory Notes 1-4 & 11-16

Table 11: Diagnostic reporting time performance (across all HSC Trusts in Northern Ireland) – QE June 2014⁸

Priority	Performance	Change compared with previous quarter	Change compared with the same quarter previous year
Urgent	% within two days: 91.8%	+ 0.1 percentage points	+0.6 percentage points
Routine	% within two weeks: 94.7%	+ 0.9 percentage points	- 0.2 percentage points
Routine	% within four weeks: 99.3%	+ 0.5 percentage points	+ 0.6 percentage points

Source: Departmental Return DRTT

⁸Refer to Explanatory Notes 1-4 & 11-16

Appendix 1: Explanatory Notes

1. The sources for the data contained in this release are the quarterly Departmental Returns SDR1 (Parts 1 & 2) and the DRTT Return. The source for the diagnostic waiting time data for the 16 selected diagnostic services is the Departmental Return SDR1 Part 1. The waiting time data for all other diagnostic services are provided by the HSC Board on the SDR1 Part 2 return. The diagnostic reporting turnaround time data are provided by the HSC Board on the DRTT return.
2. All of the data contained in the tables can be supplied by individual diagnostic service or HSC Trust if this level of detail is required (as in previous bulletins). In addition, quarterly data relating to diagnostic waiting times has also been published in spreadsheet format (Microsoft Excel), split by HSC Trust and diagnostic service, in order to aid secondary analysis. These data are available at http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/stats_research/hospital-stats/waiting_times_main/stats-waiting-times.htm Diagnostic reporting time data are not currently available in spreadsheet format online. However, data are available, split by HSC Trust and diagnostic service, upon request.
3. Data include all patients living outside Northern Ireland and all privately funded patients waiting for treatment in Health Service hospitals in Northern Ireland.
4. A diagnostic service provides an examination, test or procedure used to identify a person's disease or condition and which allows a medical diagnosis to be made.
5. The diagnostic waiting time relates to all tests with a diagnostic element. Included are tests that are part diagnostic and subsequently part therapeutic. A therapeutic procedure is defined as a procedure which involves actual treatment of a person's disease, condition or injury. Purely therapeutic procedures are excluded from the diagnostic waiting times target. Patients currently admitted to a hospital bed and waiting for an emergency procedure, patients waiting for a planned procedure and patients waiting for procedures as part of screening programmes are also excluded from the waiting times target.
6. The waiting time for a diagnostic service commences on the date on which the referral for the service is received by the Health Care provider and stops on the date on which the test is performed. Patients who cannot attend (CNA) have their waiting time adjusted to commence on the date they informed the HSC Trust they could not attend, while patients who do not attend (DNA) have their waiting time adjusted to commence on the date of the DNA.
7. A number of the diagnostic services reported on the SDR 1 return are managed as either an ordinary admission or a day case. As such, they will be included in both the inpatient and diagnostic services waiting time figures. Due to the risk of multiple counting, these two sets of data should not be combined to give an estimate of the total number of patients waiting for either inpatient admission or a diagnostic service.
8. Waiting time statistics for day case endoscopies also include patients waiting for endoscopies that are managed as ordinary admissions.
9. For Tables 2, 3 and 4 and Figures 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10, diagnostic waiting timeband relates to the number of completed weeks a patient has been waiting for a diagnostic service. For example, a patient waiting exactly 6 weeks would be included in the 0-6 week time band and a patient waiting exactly 6 weeks and 1 day would be included in the >6-9 (greater than 6 weeks but waiting no longer than 9 weeks) week time band.
10. Patients waiting 'longer than nine weeks' for a diagnostic service includes all patients in the >9 - 13, >13 - 21, >21 - 26 and > 26 week time bands.

11. The 16 selected diagnostic services are: Magnetic Resonance Imaging; Computerised Tomography; Non-Obstetric Ultrasound; Barium Studies; DEXA Scan; Radio-Nuclide Imaging; Pure Tone Audiometry; Echocardiography; Perfusion Studies; Peripheral Neurophysiology; Sleep Studies; Urodynamics Pressures and Flows; Colonoscopy; Flexi Sigmoidoscopy; Cystoscopy and Gastroscopy.
12. The diagnostic reporting turnaround time is the time interval between the completion of the diagnostic test and the results of that test being verified or dispatched to the referring clinician, whichever is applicable.
13. The diagnostic reporting time target applies to a selected subset of diagnostic services. These services are: Magnetic Resonance Imaging; Computerised Tomography; Non-Obstetric Ultrasound; Barium Studies; DEXA Scan; Radio-Nuclide Imaging; Pure Tone Audiometry; Echocardiography; Perfusion Studies; Peripheral Neurophysiology; Sleep Studies; and Urodynamics Pressures and Flows.
14. HSC Trusts use the Northern Ireland Picture Archive and Communications System (NIPACS) as the mechanism for managing imaging services. The HSC Board has carried out a validation exercise with Trusts to address any data quality issues. The quality of imaging waiting times and reporting times have improved in recent years.
15. The 2014/15 Ministerial diagnostic target, as detailed in the Health and Social Care (Commissioning Plan) Direction (Northern Ireland) 2014, states that, from April 2014, no patient should wait longer than nine weeks for a diagnostic test, and all urgent diagnostic tests are reported on within two days of being undertaken.
16. The 2014/15 Ministerial indicators of performance, as detailed in the Health and Social Care (Indicators of Performance) Direction (Northern Ireland) 2014, measure (i) percentage of routine diagnostic tests reported on within 2 weeks of the test being undertaken and (ii) percentage of routine diagnostic tests reported on within four weeks of the test being undertaken.
17. Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety policy is to publish revised figures with subsequent statistical releases unless it is decided that the magnitude of the change merits earlier notification. Amended SDR1 Part 1 returns for the Southern HSC Trust were received for the quarter ending March 2014. As a consequence, the total number waiting has been revised from 69,042 to 69,031 at 31st March 2014. The changes have been reflected in this bulletin.
18. Figures relating to the quarter ending 30th September 2014 will be released on Thursday 27th November 2014.

Additional Information

Further information on Waiting Times for Diagnostic Services at HSC Trusts in Northern Ireland is available from:

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