

INFORMATION
ANALYSIS
DIRECTORATE



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

Reader Information

Purpose	This publication presents information on waiting times for diagnostic services in Northern Ireland at 31 st December 2014 and diagnostic reporting times during the quarter ending 31 st December 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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Statistical Quality	Information contained in this release that has been sourced from HSC Trusts has been validated by the Department prior to release.
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 31st December 2014, there were 81,288 patients waiting for a diagnostic service at HSC Trusts in Northern Ireland. This represents an increase of 11.4% (8,313) compared with the end of September 2014 and an increase of 23.9% (15,702) compared to the end of December 2013 (Figure 1 & Table 1a).
- Of the 81,288 patients waiting, 55.1% (44,825) were waiting for an Imaging Service, 27.1% (22,025) were waiting for a Physiological Measurement test and 17.8% (14,438) were waiting for a Day Case Endoscopy (Figure 2 & Table 1b).
- Of the 81,288 patients waiting for a diagnostic service, almost 1 in 4 were waiting for a Non-obstetric Ultrasound (18,659, 23.0%) (Figure 3 & Table 3).
- There were 25,787 (31.7%) patients waiting longer than 9 weeks for a diagnostic service at the end of December 2014, an increase of 8,546 (49.6%) on the corresponding number at the end of the previous quarter (17,241), and more than one and a half times the number (15,722 more) on 31st December 2013 (10,065) (Figure 6 & Tables 2, 3 & 4).
- There were 134,588 completed diagnostic reports verified and dispatched to the referring clinician in Northern Ireland during the quarter ending December 2014, a decrease of 2.1% (2,854) on the 137,442 reported in the previous quarter, and an increase of 0.6% (868) on the same quarter last year (133,720) (Figure 11 & Table 5).
- In Northern Ireland as a whole, 91.7% of all urgent diagnostic tests were reported on within 2 days in the quarter ending December 2014, compared to 91.6% in the previous quarter and 91.8% for the same quarter last year (Figure 16 & Tables 10 & 11).
- During the quarter ending December 2014, 95.6% of routine diagnostic tests were reported on within 2 weeks and 99.0% were reported on within 4 weeks (Figure 16 & Tables 10 & 11).

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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/statistics/publications-statistics.htm>

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Technical Notes

This statistics release is part of a quarterly data series presenting information on waiting times and reporting times for diagnostic services at HSC Trusts in Northern Ireland.

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/statistics/hospital/waitingtimes/waitingtimes-diagnostic.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 on the SDR1 Part 1 return 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.

The information contained within this publication is currently under review. The Department is looking at how information on diagnostic waiting and reporting times is sourced and the validation procedures that are carried out. All quality issues identified as part of this review are being addressed on an ongoing basis.

The information contained within this publication are not currently 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. It allows 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 31st December 2014 and during the quarter ending (QE) December 2014, respectively.

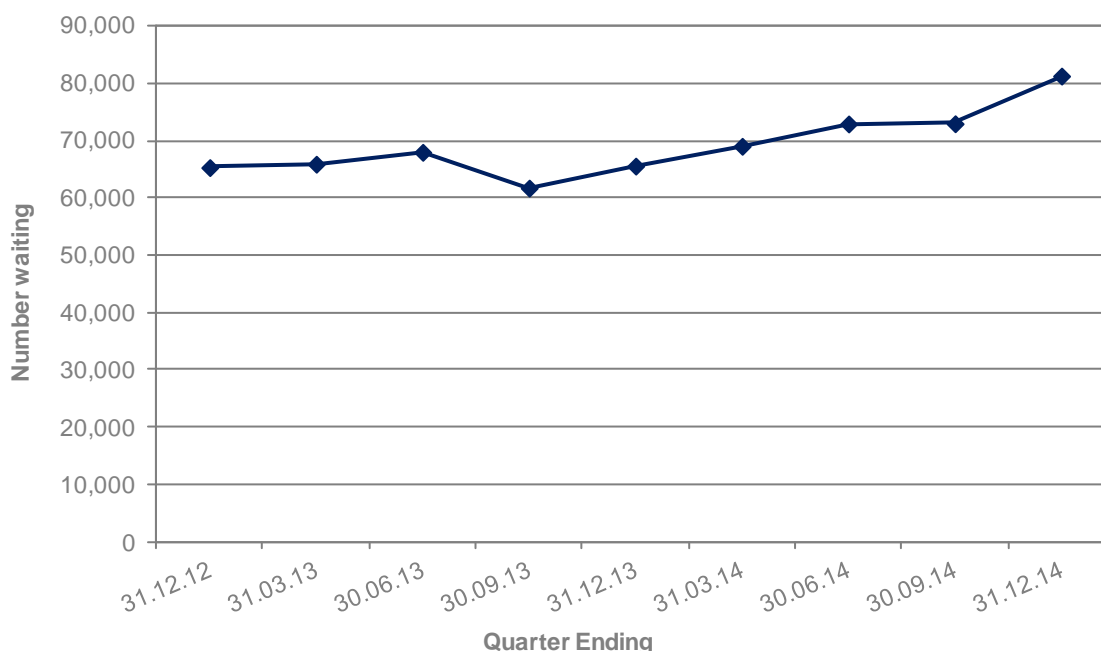
Waiting Times for Diagnostic Services

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 31st December 2014 was 81,288. This represents an increase of 8,313 (11.4%) on the number waiting at 30th September 2014 (72,975) and 15,702 (23.9%) more than at 31st December 2013 (65,586) (Figure 1 & Table 1a).

Figure 1: Total number of patients waiting: Quarterly trends 31st December 2012 to 31st December 2014

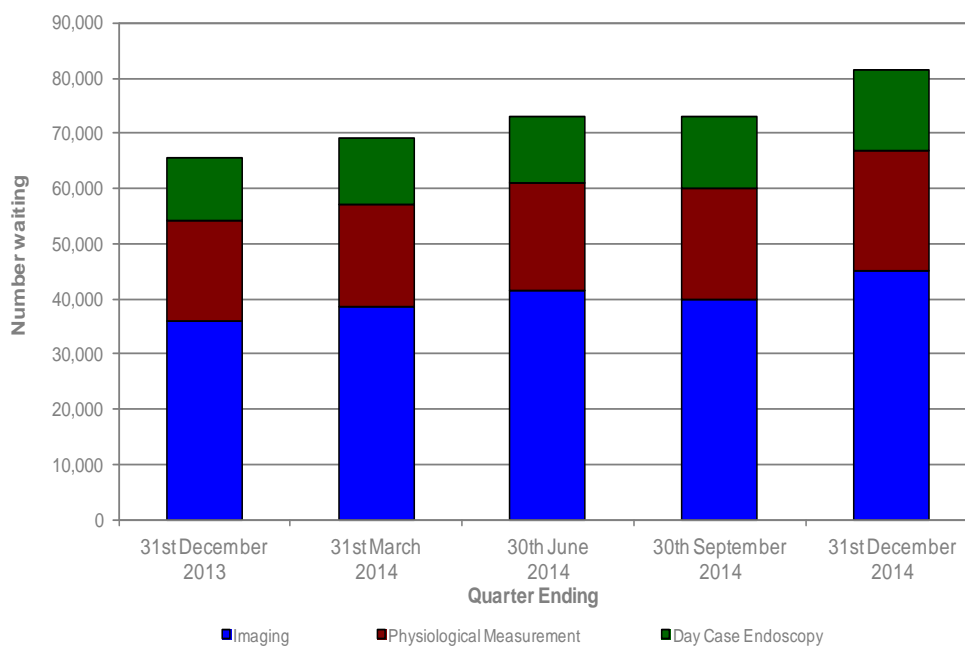


¹ Refer to Explanatory Notes 1-10 & 17-19

Total patients waiting by Diagnostic category¹

Of the 81,228 patients waiting, 55.1% (44,825) were waiting for an Imaging Service, 27.1% (22,025) were waiting for a Physiological Measurement test and 17.8% (14,438) were waiting for a Day Case Endoscopy (Figure 2 & Table 1b).

Figure 2: Total number of patients waiting by category of service: Quarterly trends 31st December 2013 to 31st December 2014



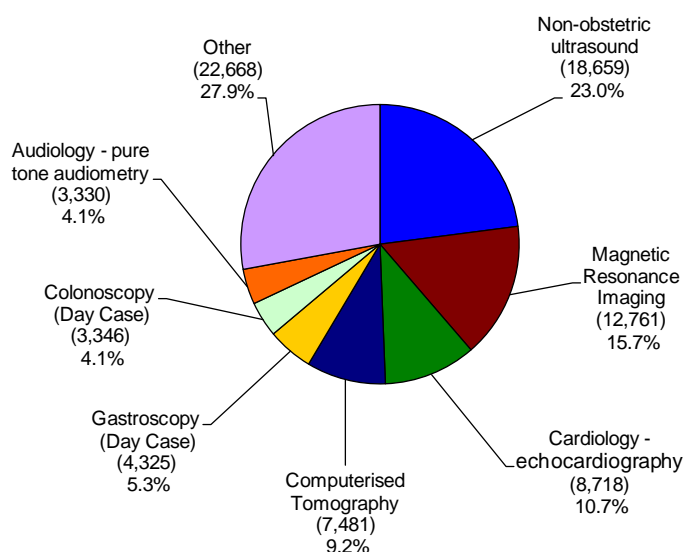
Total patients waiting by Diagnostic service²

Almost three-quarters (72.1%, 58,620) of the 81,228 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); Colonoscopy (Day Case); and Pure Tone Audiometry (Figure 3 & Table 3).

¹ Refer to Explanatory Notes 1-10 & 17-19

² Refer to Explanatory Notes 1-11 & 17-19

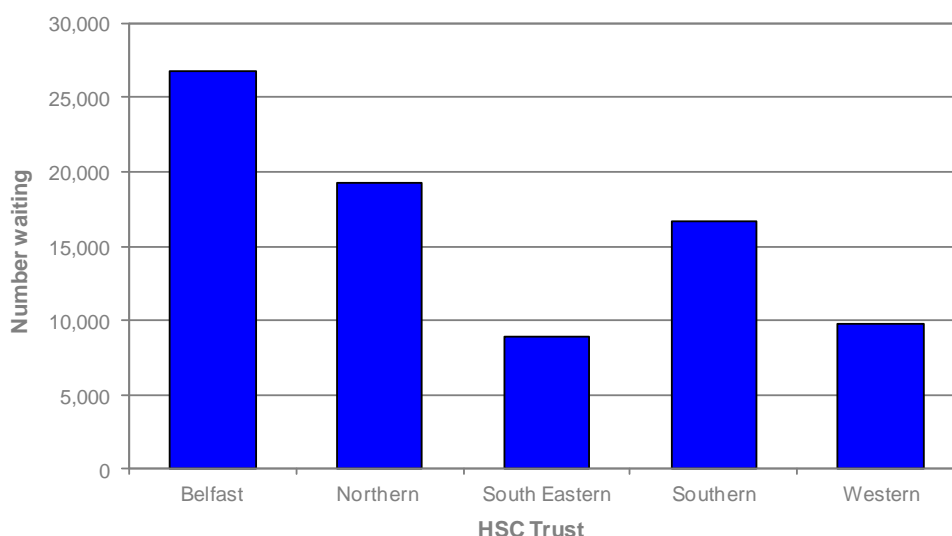
Figure 3: Total number of patients waiting by diagnostic service at 31st December 2014



Total patients waiting by HSC Trust²

Just under a third (32.9%, 26,742) of patients waiting for a diagnostic service were waiting in the Belfast HSC Trust. A further 23.7% (19,227) were waiting in the Northern HSC Trust, 20.5% (16,630) in the Southern HSC Trust, 12.0% (9,732) in the Western HSC Trust and 11.0% (8,957) in the South Eastern HSC Trust (Figure 4 & Table 4).

Figure 4: Total number of patients waiting by HSC Trust at 31st December 2014



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.

² Refer to Explanatory Notes 1-11 & 17-19

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

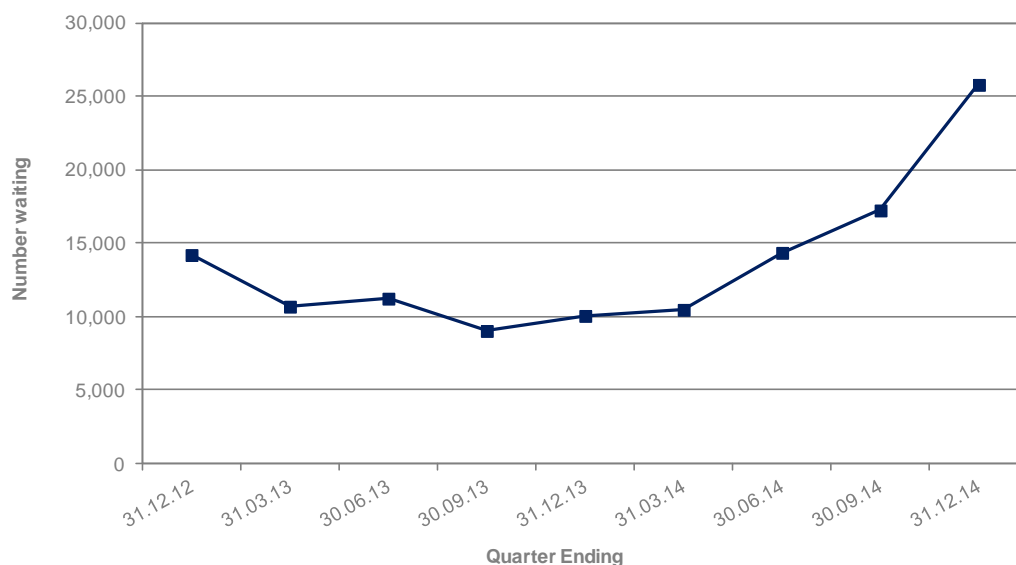
HSC Trust	Target Achieved?
	No patient waiting longer than nine weeks
Belfast	No
Northern	No
South Eastern	No
Southern	No
Western	No
Northern Ireland	No

Number of patients waiting longer than the 2014/15 maximum waiting time target

At the end of December 2014, Northern Ireland did not meet this target, nor did any of the individual Trusts (Table 4 & Figure 5).

At 31st December 2014, there were 25,787 (31.7%) patients waiting longer than 9 weeks for a diagnostic test. This represents an increase of 8,546 (49.6%) on 30th September 2014 (17,241), and more than one and a half times the number (15,722 more) at 31st December 2013 (10,065) (Figure 6 & Table 2).

Figure 6: Number of patients waiting longer than 9 weeks: Quarterly trends 31st December 2012 to 31st December 2014

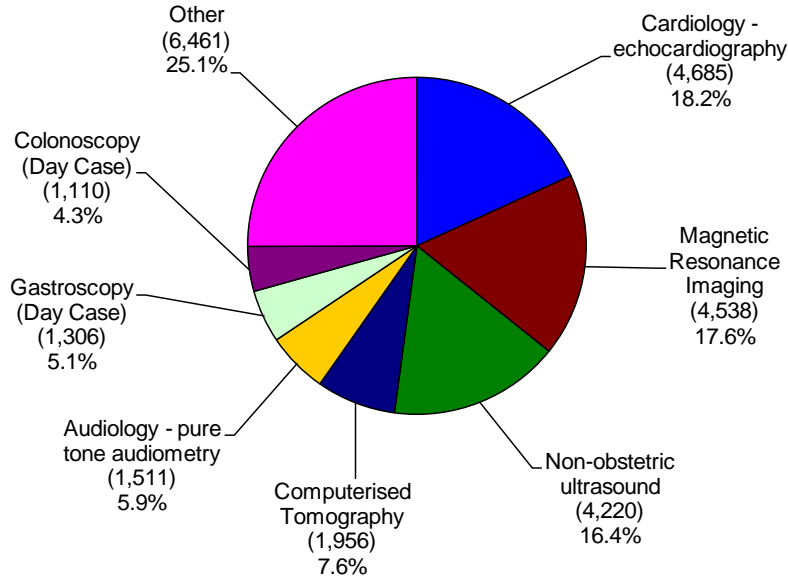


³ Refer to Explanatory Notes 1-12, 15 & 17 - 19

Patients waiting longer than the 2014/15 maximum waiting time target by Diagnostic service³

Almost three-quarters (74.9%, 19,326) of the 25,787 patients waiting more than 9 weeks were waiting for one of the following seven diagnostic services: Echocardiography; Magnetic Resonance Imaging; Non-obstetric Ultrasound; Computerised Tomography; Pure Tone Audiometry; Gastroscopy (Day Case) and Colonoscopy (Day Case) (Figure 7 & Table 3).

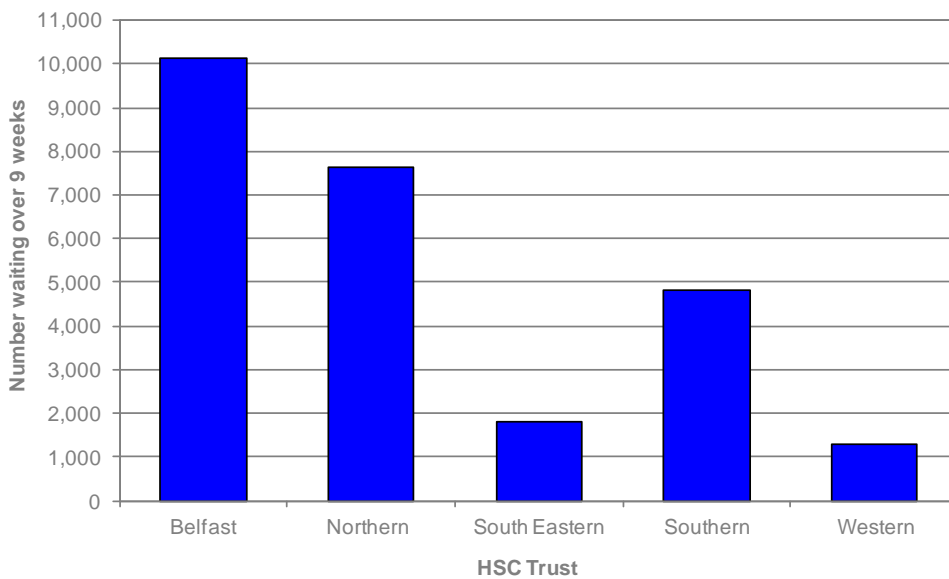
Figure 7: Number of patients waiting longer than 9 weeks by diagnostic service at 31st December 2014



Patients waiting longer than the 2014/15 maximum waiting time target by HSC Trust³

Of the 25,787 patients waiting longer than 9 weeks for a diagnostic service, 39.4% (10,163) were waiting in the Belfast HSC Trust, 29.7% (7,652) in the Northern HSC Trust, 18.7% (4,814) in the Southern HSC Trust, 7.1% (1,835) in the South Eastern HSC Trust, and 5.1% (1,323) in the Western HSC Trust (Figure 8 & Table 4).

Figure 8: Number of patients waiting longer than 9 weeks by HSC Trust at 31st December 2014

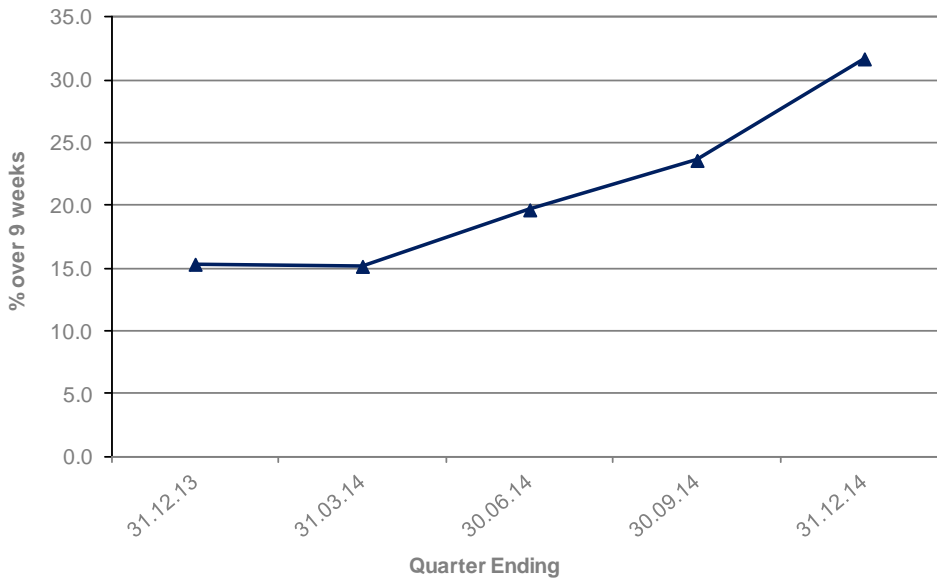


³ Refer to Explanatory Notes 1-12, 15 & 17 - 19

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

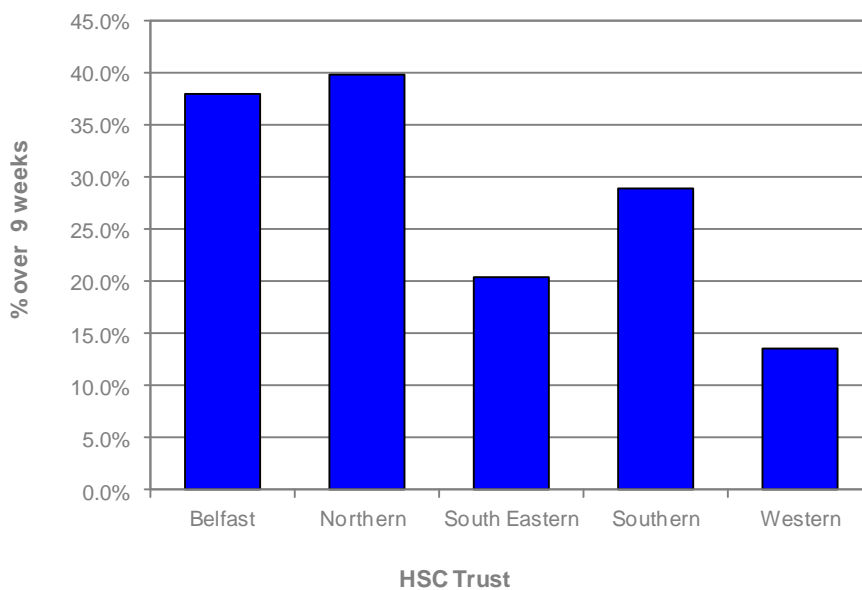
At the end of December 2014, 31.7% (25,787) of patients were waiting more than 9 weeks for a diagnostic service, compared with 23.6% (17,241) at the end of September 2014 and 15.3% (10,065) at the end of December 2013 (Figure 9 & Tables 1a & 2).

Figure 9: Proportion of patients waiting longer than 9 weeks: Quarterly trends 31st December 2013 to 31st December 2014



At 31st December 2014, 39.8% (7,652 out of 19,227) of patients in the Northern HSC Trust were waiting longer than 9 weeks for a diagnostic service. The comparable proportion in the Belfast HSC Trust was 38.0% (10,163 out of 26,742), with 28.6% (4,814 out of 16,630) in the Southern HSC Trust, 20.5% (1,835 out of 8,957) in the South Eastern HSC Trust and 13.6% (1,323 out of 9,732) in the Western HSC Trust (Figure 10 & Table 4).

Figure 10: Proportion of patients waiting longer than 9 weeks in each HSC Trust at 31st December 2014



³ Refer to Explanatory Notes 1-12, 15 & 17 - 19

Diagnostic Reporting Times

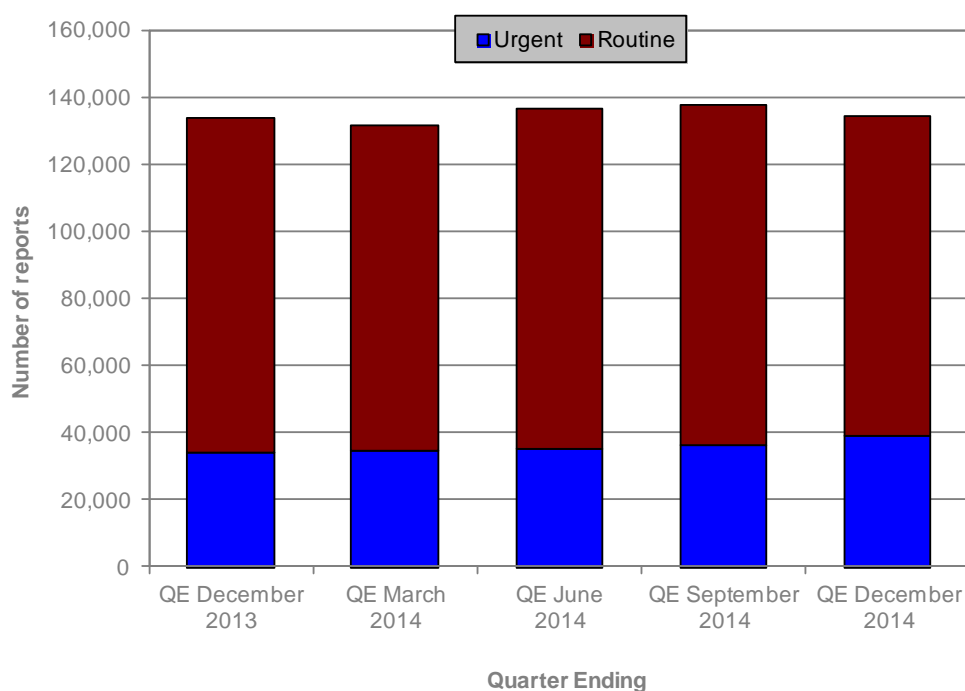
The diagnostic reporting turnaround time is the length of time between the diagnostic test being undertaken and the results being verified and dispatched to the referring clinician in Northern Ireland.

Diagnostic reporting turnaround times relate only to a selected subset of Imaging and Physiological Measurement tests (See explanatory note 15). Day case endoscopies are reported on the day of the test and as such are not included.

Total completed diagnostic reports⁴

134,588 diagnostic reports were verified and dispatched to the referring clinician in Northern Ireland during the quarter ending December 2014. This represents a decrease of 2,854 (2.1%) on the number of completed reports during the quarter ending September 2014 (137,442), and an increase of 868 (0.6%) on the number completed during the quarter ending December 2013 (133,720) (Figure 11 & Table 5).

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

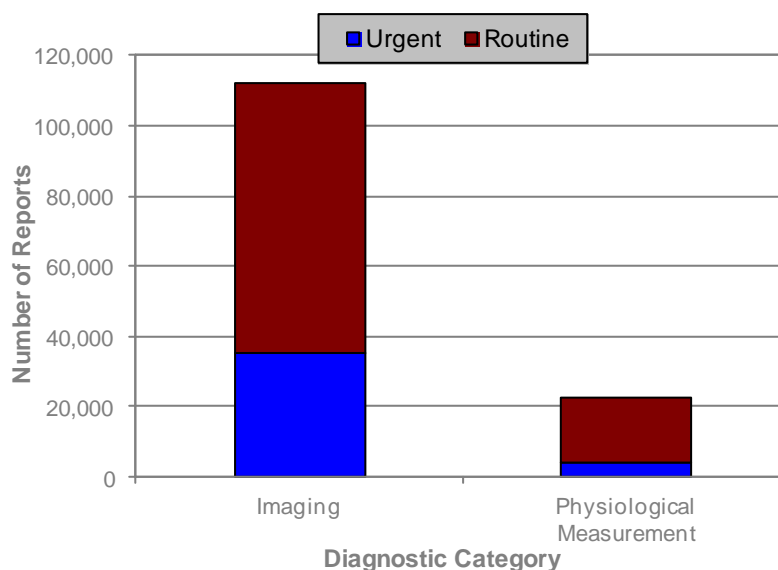


⁴ Refer to Explanatory Notes 1-5, 13-14 & 17-19

Diagnostic reports by diagnostic category⁴

Of the 134,588 completed diagnostic test reports, 112,302 (83.4%) were reporting on an Imaging test and 22,286 (16.6%) were reporting on a Physiological Measurement test (Figure 12 & Tables 6 & 7).

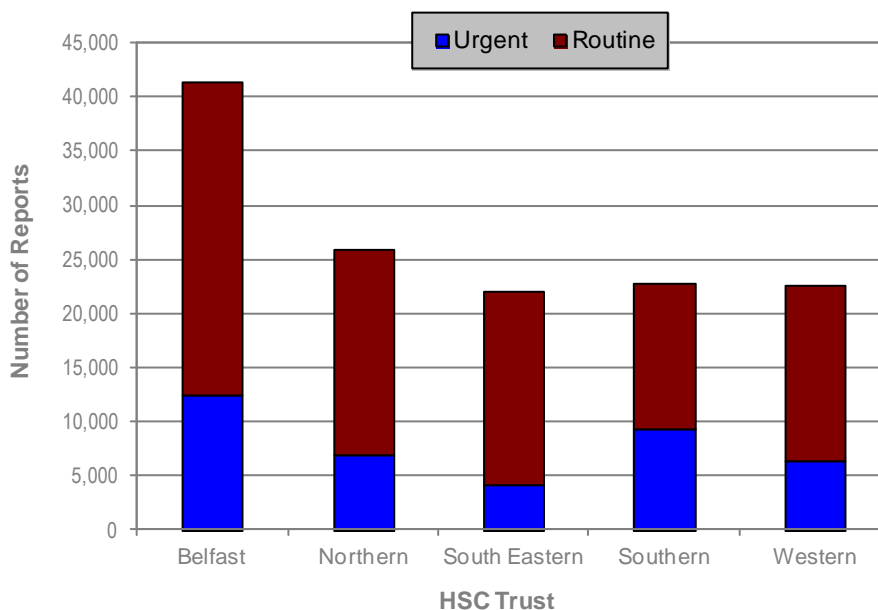
Figure 12: Number of completed diagnostic reports by category and priority during QE December 2014



Diagnostic reports by HSC Trust⁴

A total of 30.7% (41,331) diagnostic reports were completed in the Belfast HSC Trust, with 19.2% (25,904) completed in the Northern HSC Trust, 16.9% (22,708) in the Southern HSC Trust, 16.7% (22,542) in the Western HSC Trust and 16.4% (22,103) 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 December 2014



⁴ Refer to Explanatory Notes 1-5, 13-14 & 17-19

2014/15 Diagnostic reporting time target⁵

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.

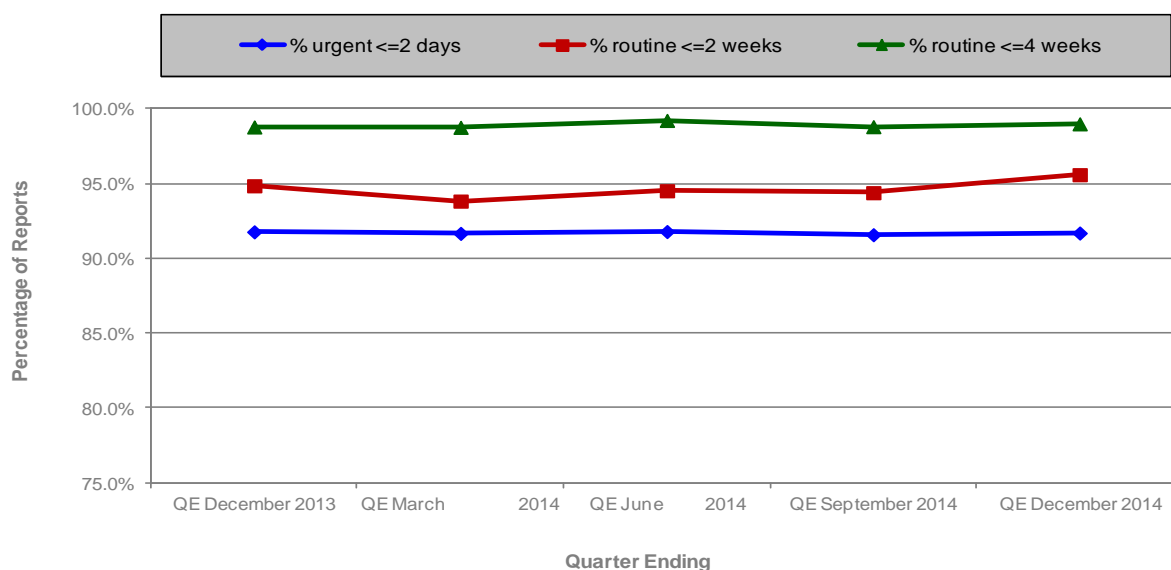
Figure 14: HSC Trust performance against the 2014/15 reporting time target

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 December 2014, Northern Ireland as whole did not meet this target, nor did any of the individual Trusts (Figure 14).

38,901 urgent diagnostic tests were reported on during the quarter ending December 2014, of which 91.7% (35,675) were reported on within 2 days. This is an increase of 0.1 percentage points compared with the previous quarter (91.6%) (Figure 15 & Table 11). Compared with the same quarter in the previous year, the percentage of urgent diagnostic tests reported on within two days has decreased by 0.1 percentage point (91.8%). (Figure 15 & Table 11).

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



⁵ Refer to Explanatory Notes 1-5, 13-15 & 17-19

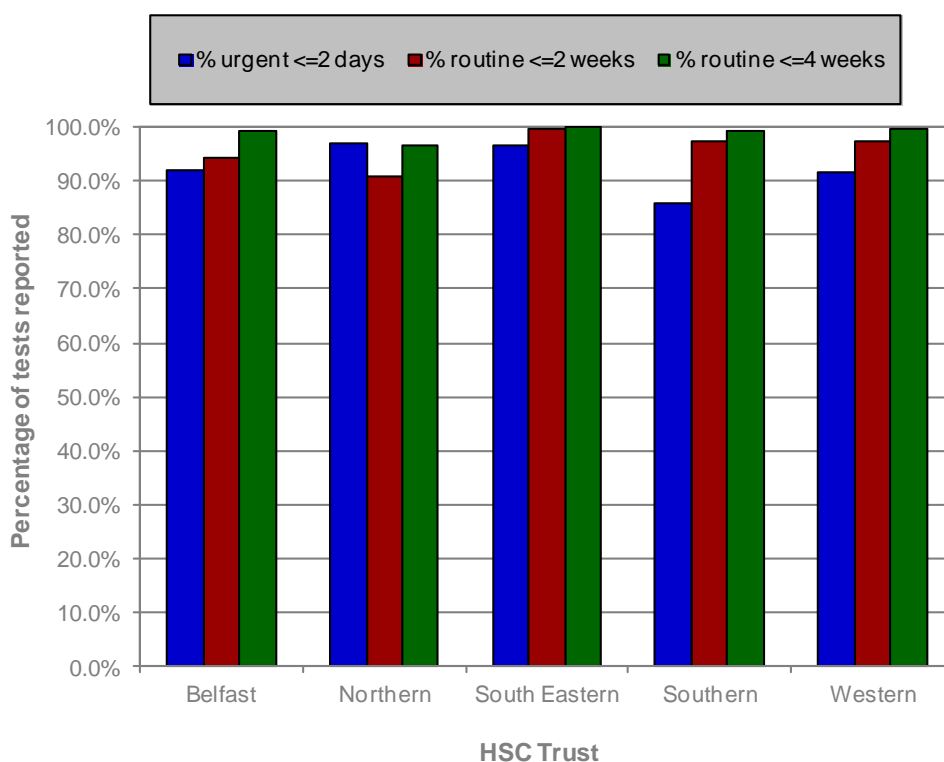
Performance against target by Diagnostic category⁵

Of the 38,901 urgent diagnostic tests reported on during the quarter ending December 2014, 35,132 were imaging and 3,769 were physiological measurement. A total of 91.5% of urgent imaging tests were reported on within 2 days, compared to 93.8% of urgent physiological measurement tests (Table 6).

Performance against target across Trusts⁵

Although no Trust managed to report on 100% of urgent diagnostic tests within 2 days, all Trusts did manage to report on at least 85.8%, with the Northern HSC Trust reporting on 96.8% within 2 days (Figure 16 & Table 10).

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



⁵ Refer to Explanatory Notes 1-5, 13-15 & 17-19

2014/15 Diagnostic reporting time indicators of performance⁶

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 December 2014, there were a total of 95,687 completed routine diagnostic tests, of which 91,489 (95.6%) were reported on within two weeks (Table 7).

A further 3,210 (3.4%) routine tests were reported on within two to four weeks, giving a total of 94,699 (99.0%) reported on within four weeks. It took more than four weeks to report on 988 (1.0%) 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 1.2 percentage points, from 94.4% to 95.6%.

Compared with the same quarter in the previous year, the percentage of routine diagnostic tests reported on within two weeks increased by 0.7 percentage points, from 94.9% to 95.6% (Figure 15 & Table 11).

The percentage of routine diagnostic tests reported on within four weeks increased by 0.2 percentage points, from 98.8% to 99.0%, compared with the previous quarter, and the same quarter in the previous year (Figure 15 & Table 11).

Indicators of performance by Diagnostic category⁶

Of the 95,687 routine diagnostic tests reported on during the quarter ending December 2014, 77,170 were imaging, while 18,517 were physiological measurement. A total of 95.9% of routine imaging tests were reported on within 2 weeks, compared to 94.4% of routine physiological measurement tests (Table 7).

A total of 99.5% of routine imaging tests were reported on within 4 weeks, compared to 96.8% of routine physiological measurement tests (Table 7).

Indicators of performance by Trust⁶

All Trusts managed to report on at least 91.0% of routine diagnostic tests within two weeks, with the South Eastern Trust reporting on 99.8% of routine diagnostic tests within two weeks. All Trusts managed to report on at least 96.8% 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).

⁶ Refer to Explanatory Notes 1-5, 13-14 & 16-19

Waiting times for Diagnostic Tests

Table 1a: Number of patients waiting for a diagnostic service – 31st December 2014¹

Total Waiting :	Number of patients waiting: 31st December 2014	Change compared with the end of the previous quarter	Change compared with the same quarter previous year
16 Selected Services*	68,798	+7980	+15,200
Other Services	12,490	+333	+502
Total	81,288	+8,313	+15,702

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

¹Refer to Explanatory Notes 1-10 & 17-19

* Refer specifically to Explanatory Note 2

Table 1b: Number of patients waiting for a diagnostic service by category – 31st December 2014²

Diagnostic Service Category	Number of patients waiting for one of the 16 selected services - 31st December 2014*	Number of patients waiting for one of the other diagnostic services - 31st December 2014	Total waiting for a diagnostic service - 31st December 2014
Imaging (excluding Interventional Imaging)	41,230	3,595	44,825
Physiological Measurement	15,771	6,254	22,025
Endoscopy (Day Case)	11,797	2,641	14,438
Total waiting for diagnostic tests	68,798	12,490	81,288

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

²Refer to Explanatory Notes 1-11 & 17-19

* Refer specifically to Explanatory Note 2

Table 2: Number of patients waiting longer than 9 weeks for a diagnostic service – 31st December 2014³

Waiting more than 9 weeks for:	Number of patients waiting: 31st December 2014	Change compared with the end of the previous quarter	Change compared with the same quarter previous year
16 Selected Services*	22,939	+7,970	+14,853
Other Services	2,848	+576	+869
Total	25,787	+8,546	+15,722

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

³Refer to Explanatory Notes 1-11 & 17-19

* Refer specifically to Explanatory Note 2

Table 3: Number of patients waiting for a diagnostic service, by type of service and weeks waiting – 31st December 2014³

Diagnostic Test	Patients Waiting for a Diagnostic Test by Weeks						Total Waiting
	0 - 6	>6 - 9	>9 - 13	>13 - 21	>21 - 26	>26	
Non-obstetric ultrasound	10,569	3,870	2,494	1,234	433	59	18,659
Magnetic Resonance Imaging	6,107	2,116	1,705	1,761	662	410	12,761
Cardiology - echocardiography	2,704	1,329	1,411	1,811	973	490	8,718
Computerised Tomography	4,434	1,091	1,049	851	43	13	7,481
Gastroscopy (Day Case)	2,251	768	509	592	132	73	4,325
Colonoscopy (Day Case)	1,681	555	372	457	134	147	3,346
Audiology - pure tone audiometry	1,250	569	371	778	103	259	3,330
Plain Film Xrays	2,345	100	6	1	0	0	2,452
Cystoscopy (Day Case)	1,031	318	269	229	74	459	2,380
Ambulatory ECG monitoring (24 hr holter)	1,554	458	256	110	1	0	2,379
DEXA Scan	1,114	314	253	53	29	3	1,766
Flexi sigmoidoscopy (Day Case)	870	301	215	233	68	59	1,746
Neurophysiology - peripheral neurophysiology	536	260	392	136	2	1	1,327
Cardiology - perfusion studies	278	167	183	277	56	214	1,175
Fluroscopy	722	146	79	35	15	2	999
Arthroscopy	122	107	171	225	89	234	948
Hysteroscopy	379	113	98	124	33	31	778
Exercise tolerance testing	433	126	83	28	9	25	704
Urodynamics - pressures and flows	262	89	124	88	17	47	627
Respiratory physiology - sleep studies	367	102	62	63	0	0	594
Other	2,856	737	410	371	151	268	4,793
Total waiting for diagnostic tests	41,865	13,636	10,512	9,457	3,024	2,794	81,288

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

³Refer to Explanatory Notes 1-12 15, 17 - 19

Table 4: Number of patients waiting for a diagnostic service, by HSC Trust – 31st December 2014³

HSC Trust	All patients waiting for a diagnostic service by HSC Trust and weeks waiting: 31st December 2014						Total Waiting
	0 - 6	>6 - 9	>9 - 13	>13 - 21	> 21 - 26	>26	
Belfast	12,181	4,398	3,813	3,517	1,151	1,682	26,742
Northern	8,595	2,980	2,514	3,384	1,407	347	19,227
South Eastern	6,018	1,104	583	786	274	192	8,957
Southern	8,508	3,308	3,002	1,496	109	207	16,630
Western	6,563	1,846	600	274	83	366	9,732
Total	41,865	13,636	10,512	9,457	3,024	2,794	81,288
Total waiting more than nine weeks:				25,787			

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

³Refer to Explanatory Notes 1-12 15, 17 - 19

Diagnostic Reporting Times

Table 5: Number of completed diagnostic reports by priority – QE December 2014⁴

Priority of Report	QE December 2014	Change compared with previous quarter	Change compared with the same quarter previous year
Urgent Reports	38,901	+2,642	+4,907
Routine Reports	95,687	-5,496	-4,039
Total Reports	134,588	-2,854	+868

Source: Departmental Return DRTT

⁴Refer to Explanatory Notes 1-5, 13-14 & 17-19

Table 6: Number of completed urgent diagnostic reports by category – QE December 2014⁵

Category of test	Length of time reporting in days				Total Completed
	0 - 2 days	>2 - 14 days	>14 - 28 days	>28 days	
Imaging	32,139	2,862	114	17	35,132
Physiological Measurement	3,536	210	18	5	3,769
Total	35,675	3,072	132	22	38,901
0 - 2 days: 35,675 (91.7%)					
> 2 days: 3,226 (8.3%)					

Source: Departmental Return DRTT

⁵Refer to Explanatory Notes 1-5, 13-15 & 17-19

Table 7: Number of completed routine diagnostic reports by category – QE December 2014⁶

Category of test	Length of time reporting in weeks			Total Completed
	0 - 2 weeks	>2 - 4 weeks	>4 weeks	
Imaging	74,008	2,761	401	77,170
Physiological Measurement	17,481	449	587	18,517
Total	91,489	3,210	988	95,687
0 - 2 weeks: 91,489 (95.6%) >2 - 4 weeks: 3,210 (3.4%) >4 weeks: 988 (1.0%)				

Source: Departmental Return DRTT

⁶Refer to Explanatory Notes 1-5, 13-14 & 16-19

Table 8: Number of completed urgent diagnostic reports by HSC Trust and time in days – QE December 2014⁵

HSC Trust	Length of time reporting in days				Total Completed
	0 - 2 days	>2 - 14 days	>14 - 28 days	>28 days	
Belfast	11,409	953	51	12	12,425
Northern	6,620	211	6	3	6,840
South Eastern	3,906	142	3	0	4,051
Southern	7,980	1,255	61	4	9,300
Western	5,760	511	11	3	6,285
Total	35,675	3,072	132	22	38,901

Source: Departmental Return DRTT

⁵Refer to Explanatory Notes 1-5, 13-14 & 16-19

Table 9: Number of completed routine diagnostic reports by HSC Trust and time in weeks – QE December 2014⁶

HSC Trust	Length of time reporting in weeks			Total Completed
	0 - 2 weeks	>2 - 4 weeks	>4 weeks	
Belfast	27,248	1,403	255	28,906
Northern	17,347	1,107	610	19,064
South Eastern	18,012	39	1	18,052
Southern	13,029	296	83	13,408
Western	15,853	365	39	16,257
Total	91,489	3,210	988	95,687

Source: Departmental Return DRTT

⁶ Refer to Explanatory Notes 1-5, 13-14 & 16-19

Table 10: Percentage of completed reports achieved – QE December 2014⁷

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	91.8%	94.3%	99.1%
Northern	96.8%	91.0%	96.8%
South Eastern	96.4%	99.8%	100.0%
Southern	85.8%	97.2%	99.4%
Western	91.6%	97.5%	99.8%
Northern Ireland	91.7%	95.6%	99.0%

Source: Departmental Return DRTT

⁷Refer to Explanatory Notes 1-5 & 13-19

Table 11: Diagnostic reporting time performance (across all HSC Trusts in Northern Ireland) – QE December 2014⁷

Priority	Performance	Change compared with previous quarter	Change compared with the same quarter previous year
Urgent	% within two days: 91.7%	+ 0.1 percentage points	- 0.1 percentage points
Routine	% within two weeks: 95.6%	+ 1.2 percentage points	+ 0.7 percentage points
Routine	% within four weeks: 99.0%	+ 0.2 percentage points	+ 0.2 percentage points

Source: Departmental Return DRTT

⁷Refer to Explanatory Notes 1-5 & 13-19

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 (See explanatory note 2). The waiting time information for all other diagnostic services is provided by the HSC Board on the SDR1 Part 2 return. The diagnostic reporting turnaround time information is provided by the HSC Board on the DRTT return.
2. 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.
3. 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. 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/statistics/hospital/waitingtimes/waitingtimes-diagnostic.htm>
4. The diagnostic waiting and reporting turnaround times returns (SDR1 Parts 1 and 2, DRTT) include patients living outside Northern Ireland and privately funded patients waiting for treatment in Health Service hospitals in Northern Ireland.
5. 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.
6. 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. There are three categories of diagnostic test: Imaging Service; Physiological Measurement test; and Day Case Endoscopy.
7. 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.
8. 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.
9. A number of the diagnostic services reported on the SDR 1 return are managed as an inpatient admission: 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.
10. Waiting time statistics for day case endoscopies also include patients waiting for these services that are managed as ordinary admissions.

11. For Tables 2, 3 and 4 and Figures 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10, each 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 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.
12. 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.
13. 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 in Northern Ireland, whichever is applicable.
14. Diagnostic reporting times apply 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.
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. The information on diagnostic and reporting times contained within this publication is currently under review. The Department is looking at how this information is sourced and the validation procedures that are carried out with a view to improving the quality. All quality issues identified as part of this review are being addressed on an ongoing basis.
18. 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.
19. Amended DRTT returns were received for the QE September 2014 for Belfast Trust. The changes have been reflected in this bulletin.
20. The information contained within this publication is not National Statistics.
21. Figures relating to the quarter ending 31st March 2015 will be released on Thursday 28th May 2015.

Additional Information

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

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