

# Impact of Covid-19 on Hospital Waiting Times

POSITION AT 30<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2020

## Introduction

DoH publish quarterly statistical reports and tables on Hospital Waiting Times. This publication will highlight the provisional Inpatient, Outpatient and Cancer Waiting Times positions for 30<sup>th</sup> June 2019 and 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020 ahead of the official statistics for the quarter ending June 2020 published at the end of August (Inpatients and Outpatients) and the end of September (Cancer). These data will give an indication of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on services.

This management information (MI) has been drawn from data extracts from the Patient Administration System (PAS) and CaPPs system at a point in time and has not been quality assured or processed to the standards required to be official statistics. In addition, this information is provisional and has not been derived to the same methodology as the National Statistics published quarterly so will not be directly comparable, however similar principles have been applied. The data presented excludes medical specialties which are not captured on PAS.

## Outpatients

It should be noted that June 2020 are provisional figures and do not include the small number of patients not recorded on the Patient Administration System.

### Total Waiting

The number of patients waiting for an outpatient appointment at 30th June 2020 (305,982) was 2.2% (6,546) higher than the same point last year (299,436). This was comprised of a decrease of 57.5% (43,327) in the number of patients waiting less than 9 weeks, a 17.2% (20,403) increase in the number of patients waiting between 9 and 52 weeks, and a 27.9% (29,470) increase in the number waiting over 52 weeks.

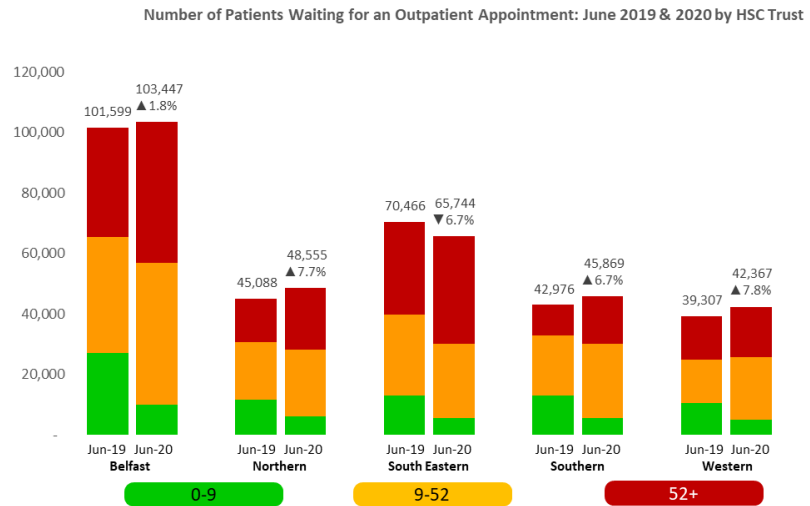
Month	Total Waiting	Waiting > 9 weeks	Waiting > 52 weeks
June 2019	299,436	224,130	105,450
June 2020	305,982	274,003	134,920

### By Urgency

At 30th June 2020 57,405(19%) of patients were waiting for an urgent appointment, with the remaining 248,577 waiting for a routine appointment. A breakdown by priority is not available for June 2019.

### By Trust

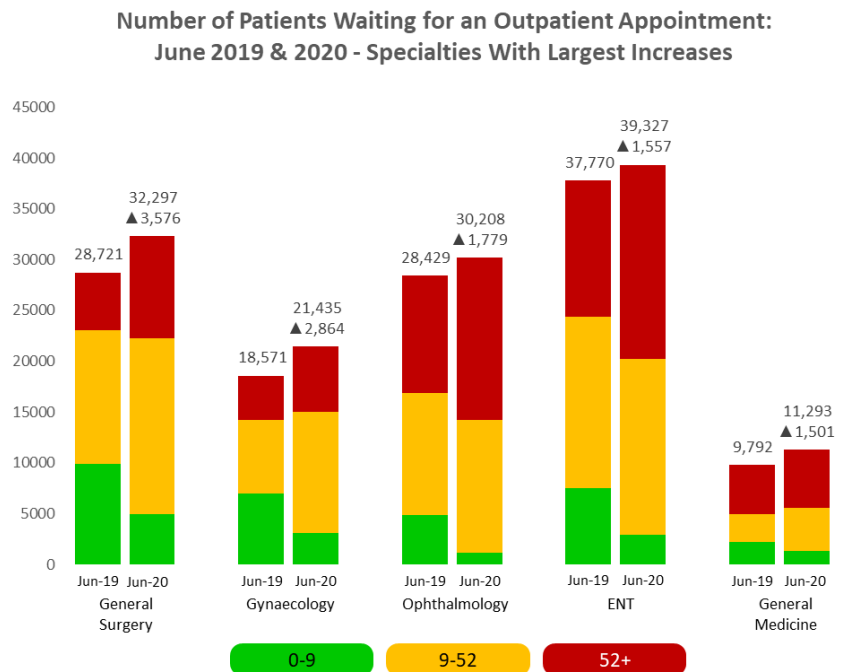
Waiting lists in the Belfast, Northern, Southern and Western HSC Trusts increased between June 2019 and June 2020. Across the same period there was a decrease in the number waiting in the South Eastern HSC Trust.



In all HSC Trusts, the number of patients waiting less than 9 weeks in June 2020 was approximately half or less the number waiting in June 2019. Across the same period, the number waiting over 52 weeks increased in all HSC Trusts.

### Specialties with Largest Increases in Number of Patients Waiting

There were 32,297 patients waiting for General Surgery in June 2020, an increase of 3,576 (12.5%) from June 2019 (28,721). This was the largest increase across this period of any specialty. Gynaecology, Ophthalmology, ENT and General Medicine also showed large increases across this period.



## Inpatients

### Total Waiting

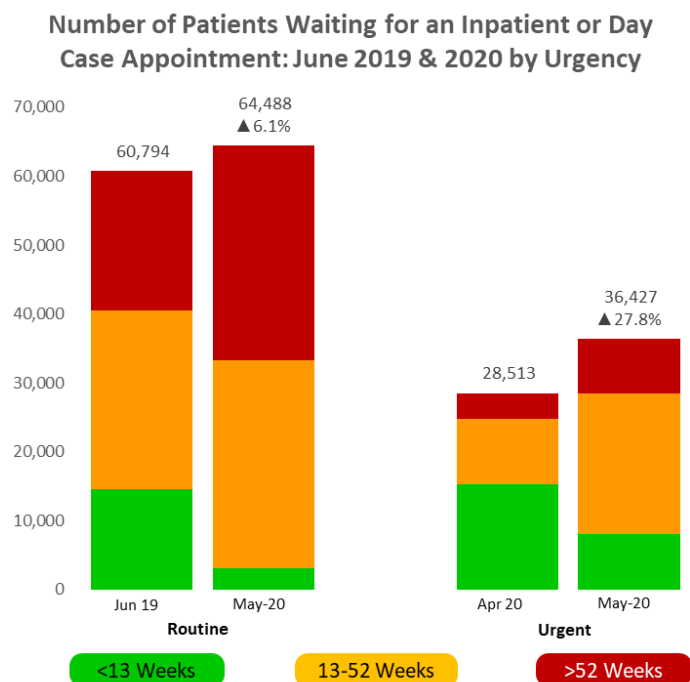
The number of patients waiting for an inpatient or day case appointment at 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020 (100,915) was 13.0% (11,608) higher than the same period last year (89,307).

Month	Total Waiting	Waiting > 13 weeks	Waiting > 52 weeks
June 2019	89,307	59,475	24,132
June 2020	100,915	89,753	39,176

### By Urgency

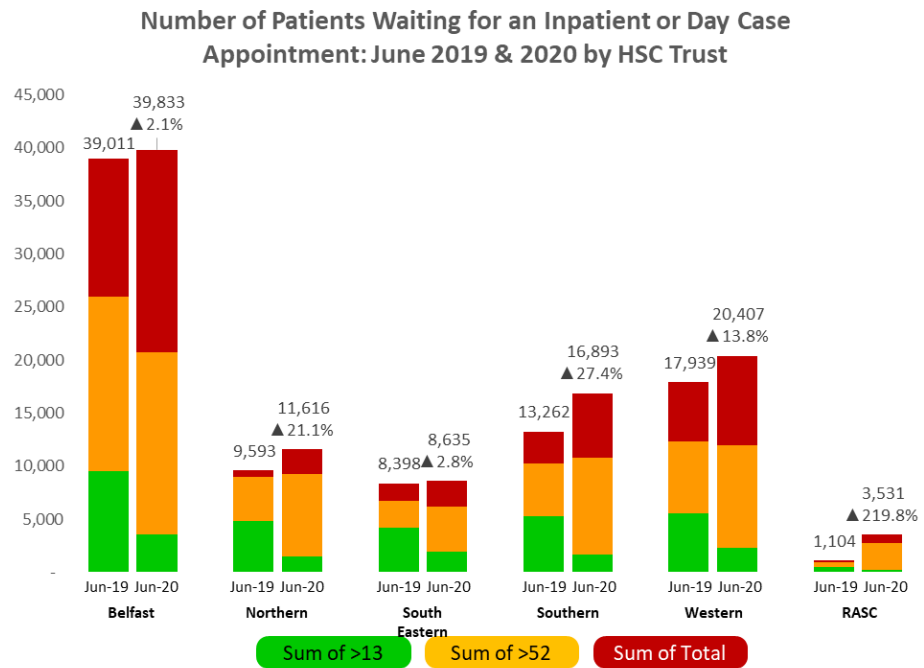
The number of patients awaiting urgent appointments increased by 7,914 (27.8%), accounting for 68.2% of the total increase.

A further increase of 3,694 (6.1%) patients was seen in the waiting list for routine appointments.



### By Trust

Between June 2019 and June 2020, the Southern HSC Trust waiting list increased by 27.4% (3,631). Across the same period there was an increase of 21.1% (2,023) in the number waiting in the Northern HSC Trust and 13.8% (2,468) in the Western HSC Trust, while the Belfast and South Eastern HSC Trust waiting lists remained similar.

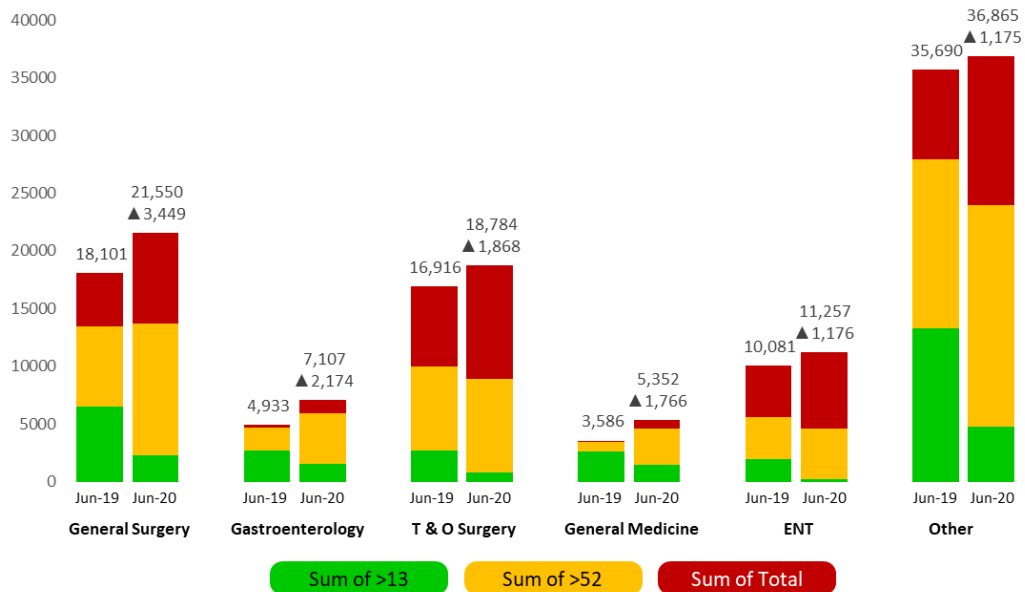


The number of patients waiting more than 13 weeks doubled in the Northern HSC Trust (an increase of 112.4%, 5,339 patients). Comparatively, the number waiting over 13 weeks in the Southern HSC Trust almost doubled (increase of 90.2%), the South Eastern HSC Trust increased by three-fifths (58.3%), half (46.0%) in the Western HSC Trust and by a quarter (23.1%) in the Belfast HSC Trust.

As Regional Assessment and Surgical Centres (RASCs) were in the process of being established in 2019, waiting lists at RASCs should not be compared with those in 2020.

## Specialties with Largest Increases to Waiting Lists

**Number of Patients Waiting for an Inpatient or Day Case Appointment:  
June 2019 & 2020 - Specialties With Largest Increases**



There were 21,550 patients waiting for General Surgery in June 2020, an increase of 3,449 (19.1%) from June 2019 (18,101). This was the largest increase across this period of any specialty.

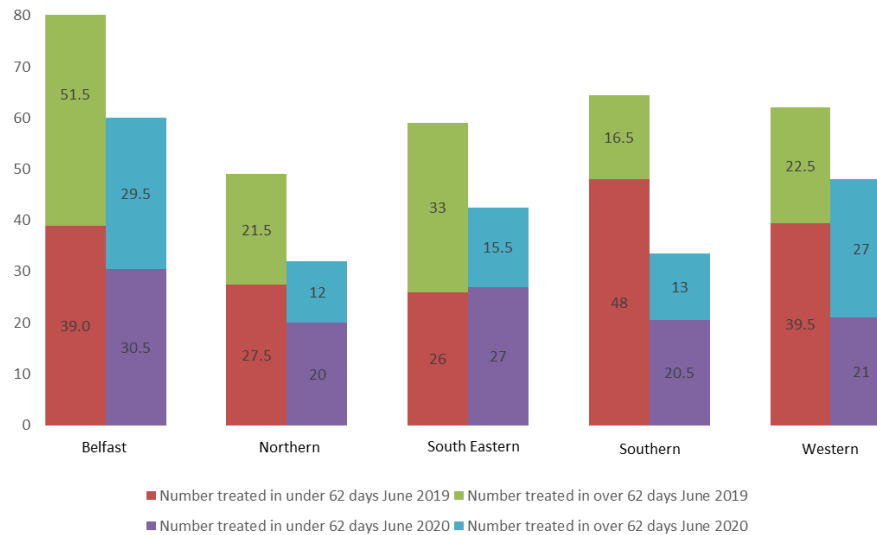
Gastroenterology, T&O Surgery, General Medicine and ENT also showed large increases across this period.

## Cancer

### 62 day Ministerial Target

There has been a decrease of 34% in the number of patients who started treatment following an urgent GP referral in June 2020 (216) when compared with June 2019 (325), with the percentage seen within the target of 62 days staying the same at 55%. However, this should be viewed in the context of the decrease in the number of patients who began treatment.

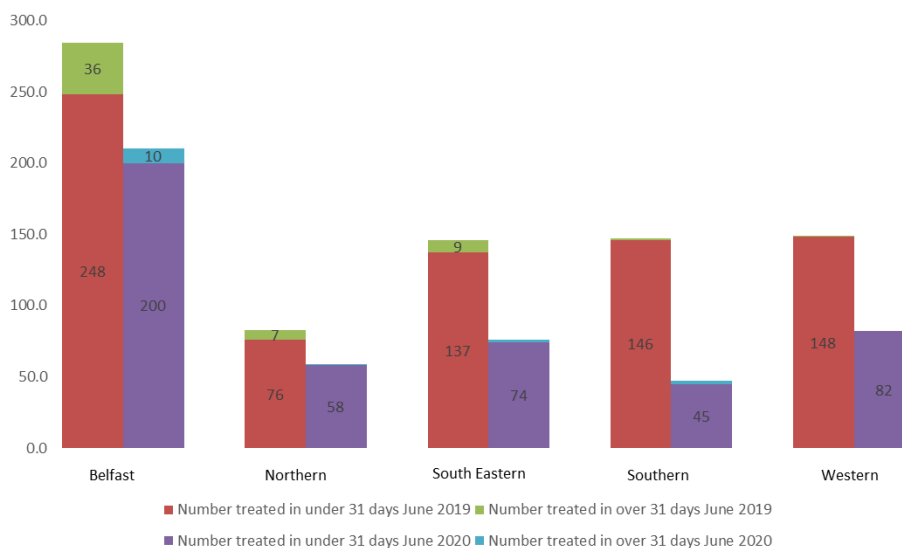
**Number of patients treated within 62 days of an urgent GP referral for suspect cancer by HSC Trust in June 2019 and June 2020**



### 31 day Ministerial Target

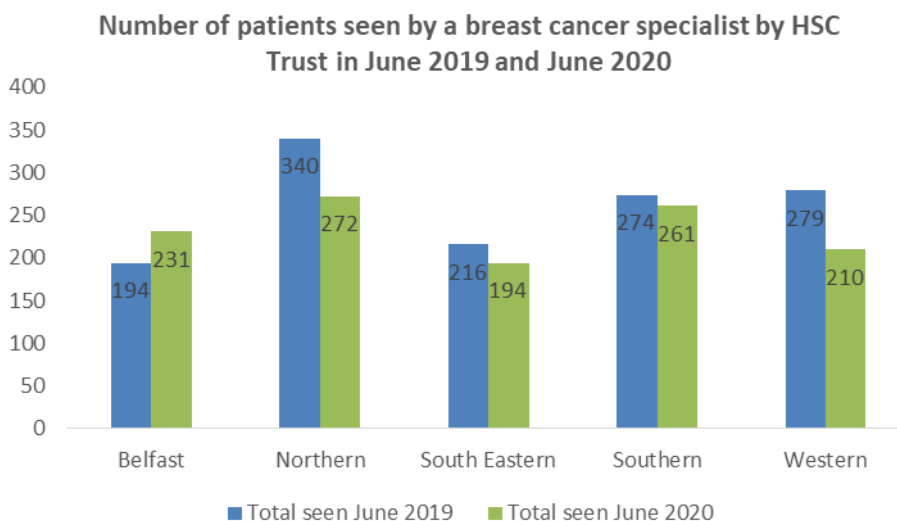
There has been a considerable decrease in the number of patients who started treatment within 31 days following a decision to treat. In June 2020, 459 out of 474 (97%) started treatment within 31 days, compared with 755 out of 809 (93%) in June 2019. The number of patients who began treatment within 31 days decreased between 2019 and 2020 in all HSC Trusts.

**Number of patients treated within 31 days of a decision to treat by HSC Trust in June 2019 and June 2020**

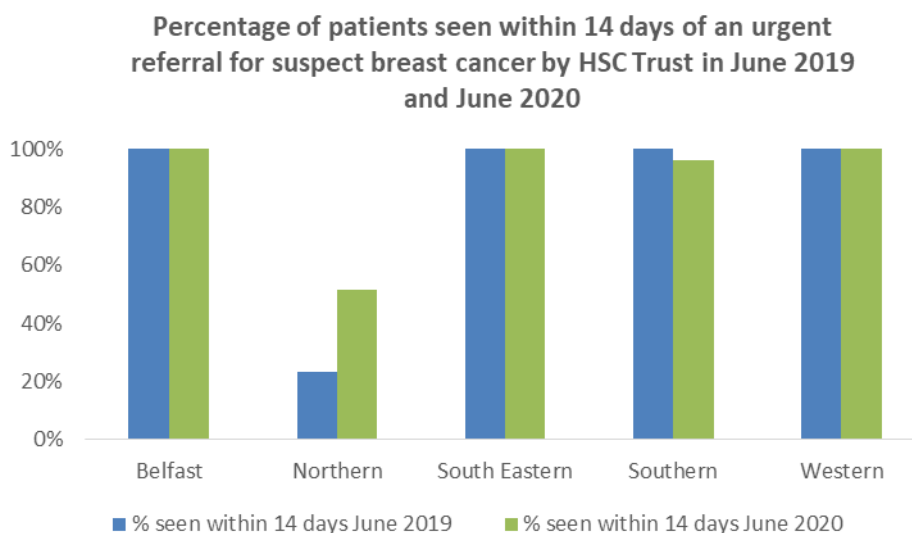


### 14 day Ministerial Target

In June 2020, 1,168 patients were seen by a breast cancer specialist following an urgent referral for suspect breast cancer, a decrease of 10% on the 1,303 seen in June 2019. A reduction in the numbers of patients seen following an urgent referral for suspect breast cancer was reported across all HSC Trusts, except Belfast where there was a 19% increase in the number of patients seen.



The percentage of patients seen within the target of 14 days increased, from 80% to 88%, with this increase mostly attributable to the Northern HSC Trust. However, this should be viewed in the context of the decrease in the number of patients seen.

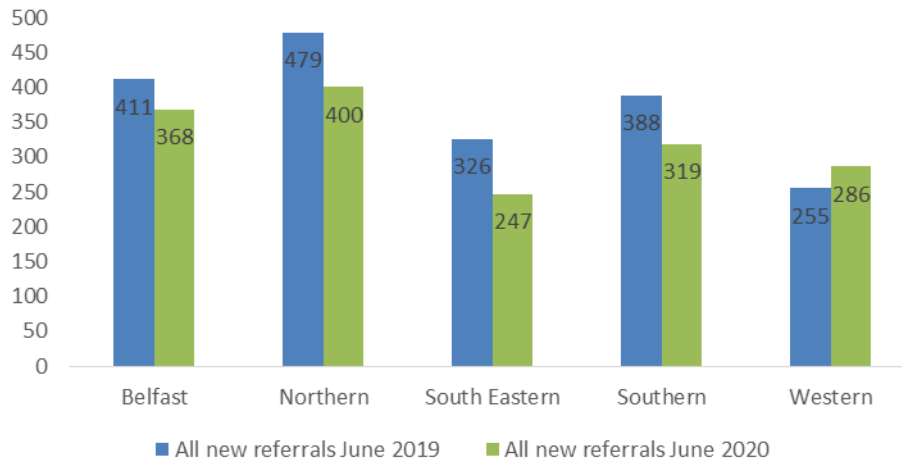




## Breast Cancer Referrals

New breast cancer referrals in June 2020 (1,620) were 13% less than in June 2019 (1,859). Within this, urgent breast cancer referrals saw a slight increase (From 1,272 to 1,299).

**Number of new referrals for suspect breast cancer by HSC Trust in June 2019 and June 2020**



All Trusts, except Western reported a reduction in the number of breast cancer referrals in June 2020 when compared with June 2019.

**Number of new urgent referrals for suspect breast cancer by HSC Trust in June 2019 and June 2020**

