

# Impact of Covid-19 on Hospital Waiting Times

POSITION AT 31<sup>st</sup> July 2020

## Introduction

DoH publish quarterly statistical reports and tables on Hospital Waiting Times. However, data covering the waiting times position as at 31<sup>st</sup> July is not routinely published. This publication will highlight the provisional Inpatient, Outpatient and Cancer Waiting Times positions for 31<sup>st</sup> July 2019 and 31<sup>st</sup> July 2020. 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 Outpatient figures are provisional and exclude a small number of patients not recorded on the Patient Administration System.

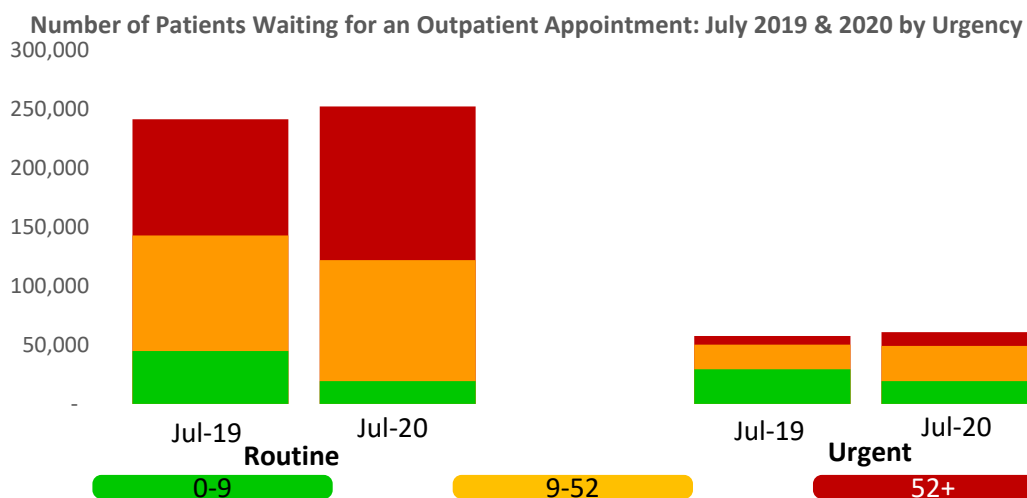
### Total Waiting

The number of patients waiting for an outpatient appointment at 31<sup>st</sup> July (313,010) was 4.7% (14,011) higher than the same point last year (298,999). This was comprised of a decrease of 46.3% (34,391) in the number of patients waiting less than 9 weeks, a 10.5% (12,521) increase in the number of patients waiting between 9 and 52 weeks, and a 33.9% (35,881) increase in the number waiting over 52 weeks.

Month	Total Waiting	Waiting > 9 weeks	Waiting > 52 weeks
July 2019	298,999	224,780	105,917
July 2020	313,010	273,182	141,798

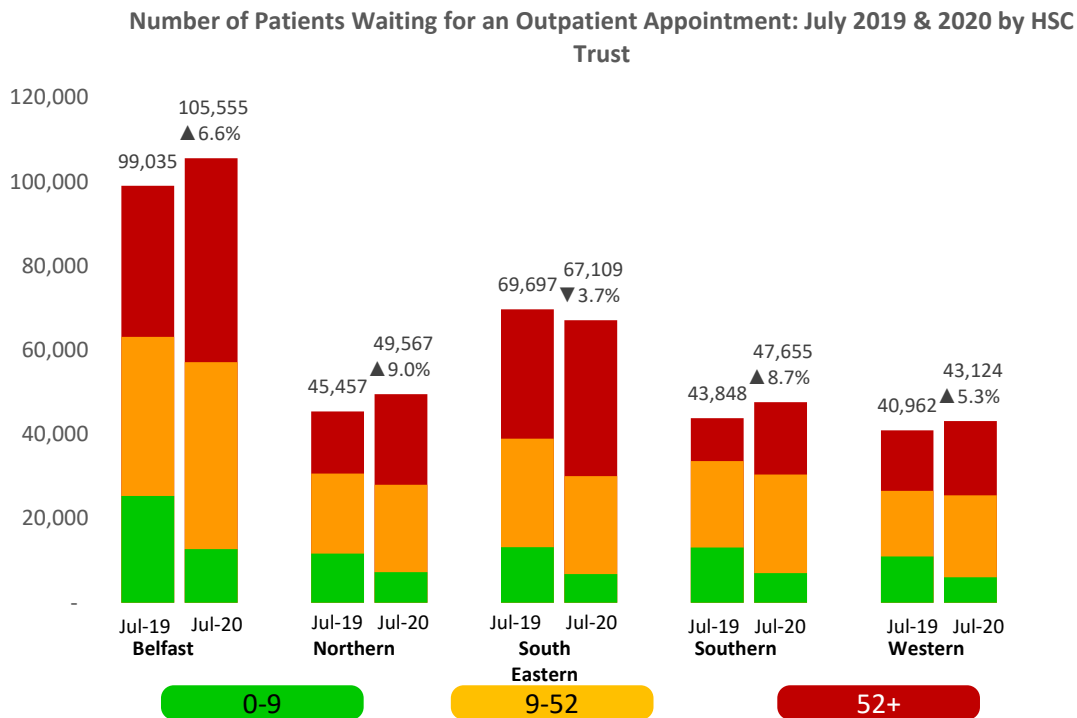
### By Urgency

At 31<sup>st</sup> July 2020 60,789 (19%) of patients were waiting for an urgent appointment, with the remaining 252,221 waiting for a routine appointment. This is compared with 57,571 patients waiting for an urgent appointment and 241,428 waiting for a routine appointment in July 2019.



## By Trust

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

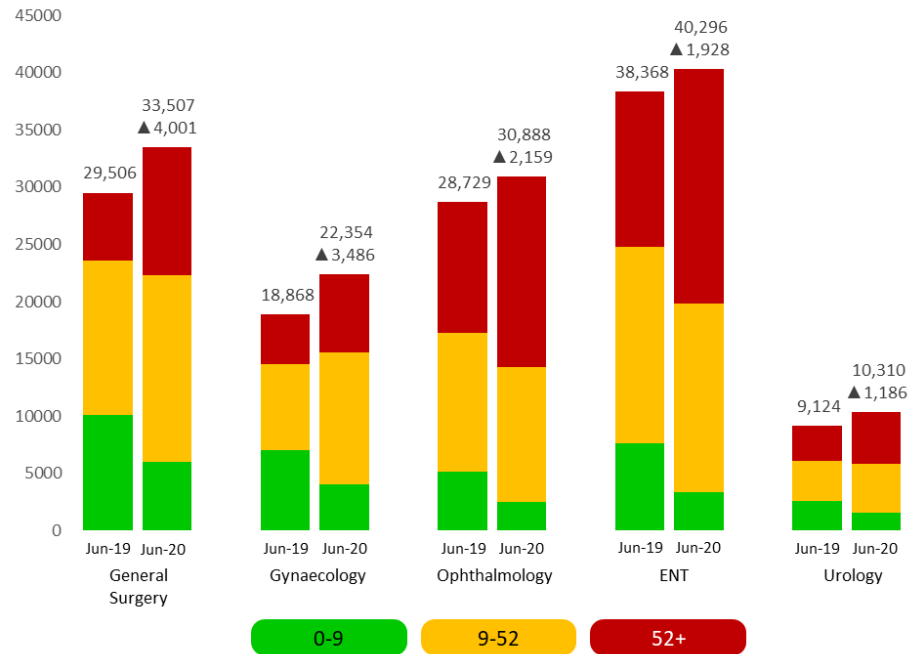


Across HSC Trusts, the number of patients waiting less than 9 weeks in July 2020 was 50% and 62% of the number waiting less than 9 weeks in July 2019. Across the same period, the number waiting over 52 weeks increased in all HSC Trusts.

## Specialties with Largest Increases in Number of Patients Waiting

There were 33,507 patients waiting for General Surgery in July 2020, an increase of 4,001 (13.6%) from July 2019 (29,506). This was the largest increase across this period of any specialty. Gynaecology, Ophthalmology, ENT and Urology also showed large increases across this period.

**Number of Patients Waiting for an Outpatient Appointment: July 2019 & 2020 - Specialties With Largest Increases**



## Inpatients

### Total Waiting

The number of patients waiting for an inpatient or day case appointment at 31<sup>st</sup> July 2020 (101,927) was 13.6% (12,175) higher than the same period last year (89,752).

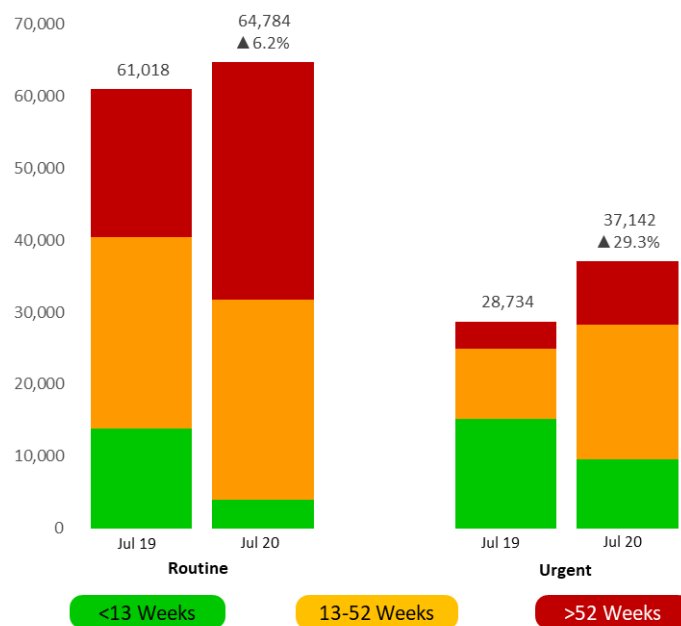
Month	Total Waiting	Waiting > 13 weeks	Waiting > 52 weeks
July 2019	89,752	60,730	24,446
July 2020	101,927	88,382	41,828

### By Urgency

The number of patients awaiting urgent appointments increased by 8,408 (29.3%), accounting for 69.1% of the total increase.

A further increase of 3,766 (6.2%) patients was seen in the waiting list for routine appointments.

Number of Patients Waiting for an Inpatient or Day Case Appointment: July 2019 & 2020 by Urgency



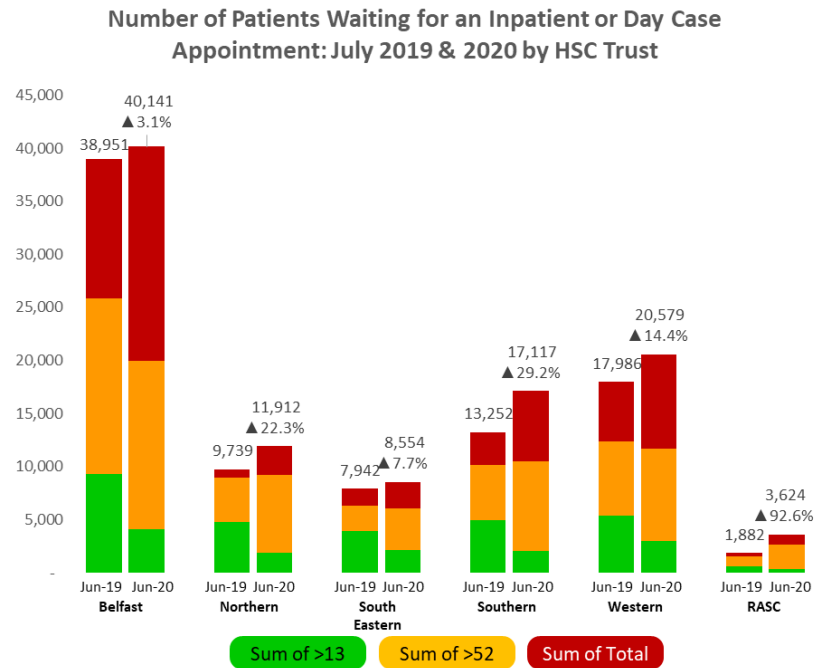
## By Trust

Between July 2019 and July 2020, the Southern HSC Trust waiting list increased by 29.2% (3,865). Across the same period there was an increase of 22.3% (2,173) in the number waiting in the Northern HSC Trust and 14.4% (2,593) in the Western HSC Trust, while the Belfast and South Eastern HSC Trust waiting lists remained similar.

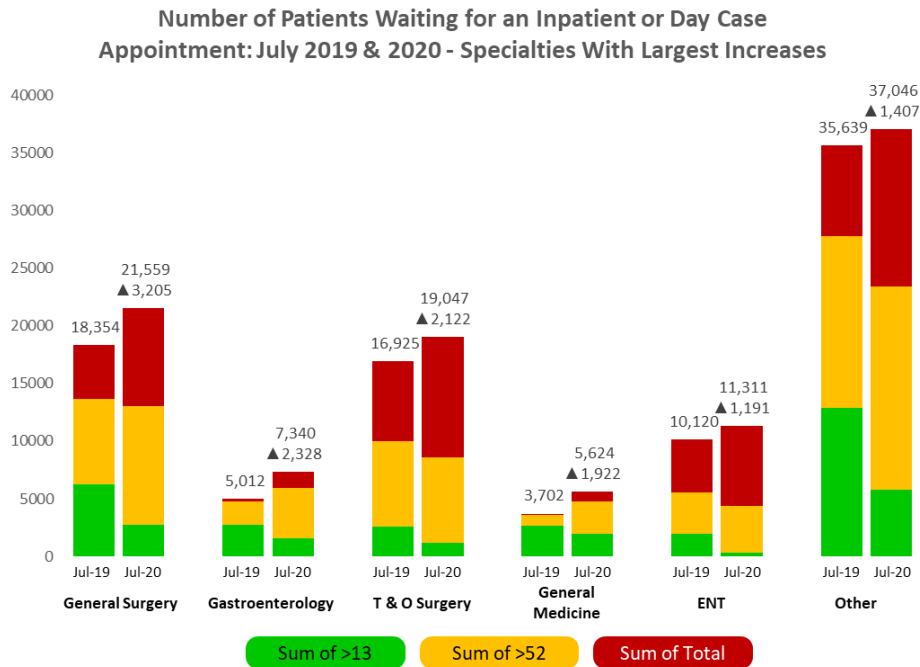
The number of patients waiting more than 13 weeks doubled in the Northern HSC Trust (an increase of 104.3%, 5,131 patients). Comparatively, the number waiting over 13 weeks in the Southern HSC Trust

increased by four fifths (81.9%), the South Eastern HSC Trust increased by three-fifths (61.0%), two fifths (39.4%) in the Western HSC Trust and by a fifth (21.5%) 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



There were 21,559 patients waiting for General Surgery in July 2020, an increase of 3,205 (17.5%) from July 2019 (18,354). 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 33% in the number of patients who started treatment following an urgent GP referral in July 2020 (218) when compared with July 2019 (323), with the percentage seen within the target of 62 days increasing from 52.3% to 63.8% during the same period. However, this should be viewed in the context of the decrease in the number of patients who began treatment.

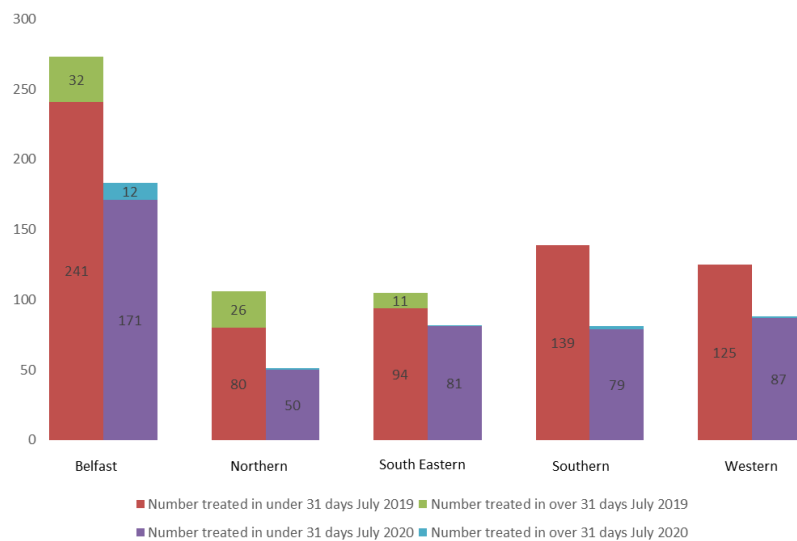
Number of patients treated within 62 days of an urgent GP referral for suspect cancer by HSC Trust in July 2019 and July 2020



### 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 July 2020, 468 out of 485 (97%) started treatment within 31 days, compared with 679 out of 748 (91%) in July 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 July 2019 and July 2020

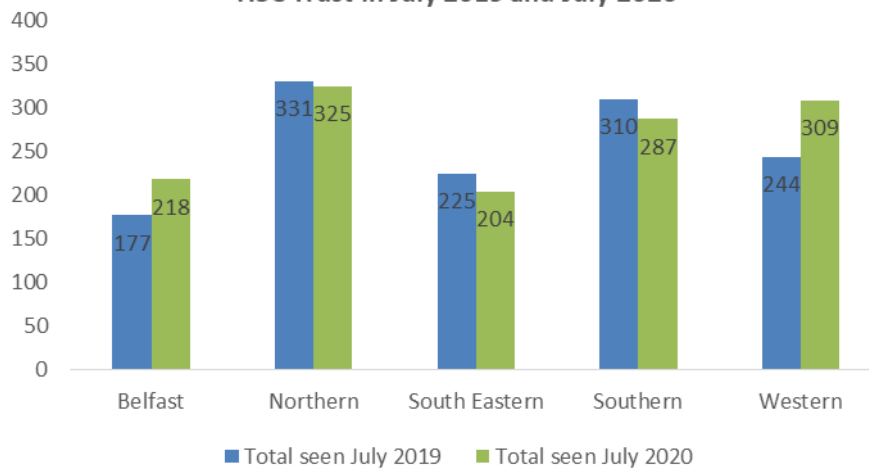




### 14 day Ministerial Target

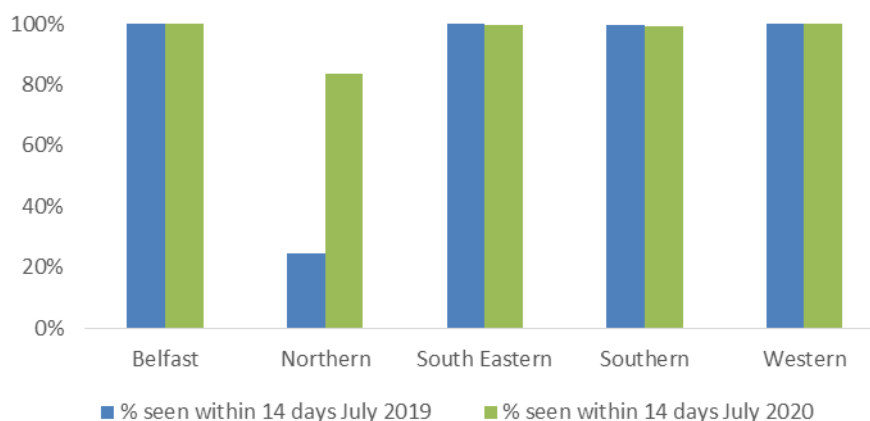
In July 2020, 1,343 patients were seen by a breast cancer specialist following an urgent referral for suspect breast cancer, an increase of 4% on the 1,287 seen in July 2019. Belfast and Western HSC Trusts saw an increase in the numbers of patients seen following an urgent referral for suspect breast cancer with a reduction reported in the Northern, South Eastern and Southern HSC Trusts.

**Number of patients seen by a breast cancer specialist by HSC Trust in July 2019 and July 2020**



The percentage of patients seen within the target of 14 days increased, from 81% to 96%, with this increase attributable to the Northern HSC Trust.

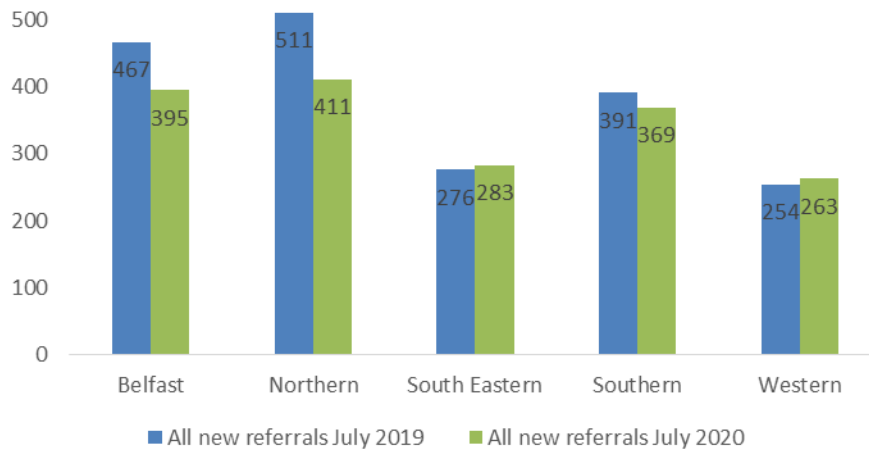
**Percentage of patients seen within 14 days of an urgent referral for suspect breast cancer by HSC Trust in July 2019 and July 2020**



## Breast Cancer Referrals

New breast cancer referrals in July 2020 (1,721) were 9% less than in July 2019 (1,899). Within this, urgent breast cancer referrals saw a slight decrease from 1,355 in July 2019 to 1,333 in July 2020.

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



South Eastern, Southern and Western HSC Trusts reported an increase in the number of urgent breast cancer referrals in July 2020 when compared with July 2019, while Belfast and Northern HSC Trusts reported a reduction in the same period.

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

