

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES BY DEPUTY  
R.G. LE HÉRISSIER OF ST. SAVIOUR**

**ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 29TH APRIL 2008**

**Question**

“What is the timescale for patients currently awaiting neurological consultations?

Would the Minister confirm whether waiting times in all other areas are on target and if not, why not?”

**Answer**

The general position concerning waiting lists is that with the exception of oral surgery, all patients are seen within a maximum of three months. This means that the vast majority of patients are seen within weeks and not months. Currently, 88% of all patients are seen within the maximum three month waiting period which is the best ever performance in our Department since the target was set to reduce waiting lists down to a bare minimum.

Currently, the focus is on outpatient waiting times to cut down further on this component of the clinical process.

All of the above work is undertaken by the Waiting List Project Board which is comprised of consultants, senior nurses and senior managers. The work specifically relates to elective surgical procedures and certain medical and diagnostic procedures. The work has now turned to reducing the waiting time in medical specialties, but medical specialties have until very recently expressly been excluded from this waiting time initiative – and all of our publicity has made this clear.

In this general context there is a six week wait for urgent referrals for a neurological consultation and a maximum of wait of six months for non-urgent consultations. Two initiatives are underway to reduce the wait in this specialty (a specialty for which there is only a single handed consultant). The first is to establish additional clinics which will be managed by a middle grade doctor – thereby alleviating the pressure on the consultant’s clinics. Secondly, my senior managers and consultants are looking to make changes in the rota system for middle grade doctors with the aim of reducing the number of cancelled clinics – cancelled clinics obviously reducing the capacity of the Department to treat and care for neurological patients.

All in all, therefore, I am very pleased with the continuing efforts to reduce waiting times even further – and particularly pleased that the medical specialties have now been included in the Waiting List Project Board’s work. It is my intention to meet with the Waiting List Project Board as part of my extended induction period. At that meeting I would wish to congratulate them on their work to date and to receive a briefing on the programme of future work.