

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES
BY THE DEPUTY OF ST. MARY
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 5th APRIL 2011**

Question

Could the Minister tell members what the hospital's policy is on waiting lists? What are the waiting times in the most accessed disciplines compared with comparator health authorities/hospitals in the UK and what have been the trends over the last ten years?

Answer

HSSD's waiting list policy is a comprehensive document (12 pages) covering a variety of issues and circumstances relating to waiting list management^[1].

HSSD's current waiting list targets are:

- 3 months for an out-patients appointment from the date the referral is received to the appointment
- 3 months for elective operations from the date the patient is added to the surgery waiting list to the day of the operation.

These targets do apply to all services except for emergency admissions or urgent patients, such as those with cancer, who are always prioritised.

At the end of 2010, across all services, 80% of outpatients' appointments and 79% of elective operations were within target. This performance against target has remained relatively static to date during 2011 (1st March 2011 - elective and outpatients waiting lists both at 79%).

HSSD does not hold the data to provide meaningful 10 year trend information. Detailed service-by-service information relating to fluctuations against target can be provided a longer time frame will be required. Specialities with the longest wait include:

Elective in-patient waits over 3 months target

Specialities with the longest waits include:

- orthopaedics - a new consultant is taking up post in April
- oral surgery - an action plan has been developed and the lead consultant will carry out some additional operating lists
- ophthalmology - the appointment of a temporary middle grade doctor is supporting reductions in waiting times (new funding for this service will be available from 2012)

Out-patients waits over 3 months target

Specialities with the longest waits include:

- diabetic services - Diabetes Jersey are funding an additional specialist nurse to help bring down waiting times
- bariatric services - HSSD is currently developing plans to tender for new UK service to provide bariatric surgery (current contract price is not competitive)
- ophthalmology – the length of patients waits is increasing in the ophthalmology service. A new middle grade doctors has been appointed to help reduce waits. A full business case is being developed in order to help meet increased demands for this service which are driven by an ageing population.

It is important to note that the elective surgical waiting lists are directly affected by activity in out-patients services. An increase in throughput of out-patients results in increased work load and potentially increase waiting in elective surgery.

HSSD targets are different to UK targets (18 weeks from the date the referral is written to treatment) and the

two jurisdictions are not directly comparable in part due to the very significant financial investment in the UK aimed specifically at reducing waiting times.

[\[1\]](#) States members requiring a full copy of the policy can request one from the Department. This policy is primarily intended to support staff to manage waiting lists, as opposed to a public facing document.