

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES
BY DEPUTY G.C.L. BAUDAINS OF ST. CLEMENT
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 11th DECEMBER 2012**

Question

Would the Minister advise of the current length of waiting lists to see hospital consultants, including preliminary lists to get onto waiting lists?

Answer

The target from receipt of GP referral to outpatient appointment for a new referral with a hospital consultant is 3 months.

The hospital consultant will review GP referral letter within one- two weeks of receipt and will categorise the referral according to clinical urgency:

- ‘Urgent’ - see within two weeks
- ‘Soon’ - see within six-eight weeks
- ‘Routine’ - as per speciality waiting list

At this point:

- (i) the patient will be given an appointment date (this appointment date will be no more than six weeks hence) OR
- (ii) the patient will be placed on a list until an appointment date is available (this list is known as a pending list) OR
- (iii) advice will be provided to the GP regarding continuing care in the community if a hospital appointment is not deemed necessary.

As of 1st December 2012 the current waiting times including the pending lists are:

Speciality ¹	No. of Patients	Average number of weeks wait until appointment ^{2,3,4}
Dental	703	28
Dermatology	556	16
Diabetes	227	6
ENT	268	6
General Medicine (exc Bariatric)	278	9
Specialty Medicine	1094	32
General Surgery	286	6
Gynaecology (exc IVF)	331	8
Nephrology	20	8
Ophthalmology	456	20
Paediatrics	33	12
Pain	477	20
Rheumatology	39	12
Sports Medicine	45	8
Trauma and Orthopaedics	1306	26
Urology	326	13
Endocrinology	43	6

Notes to table:

1. Within some specialties there are sub-specialities for example: 'Dental' includes Oral Surgery, Community Dental and Orthodontics; 'Specialty Medicine' includes Cardiology, Respiratory, Gastroenterology and Neurology.
2. 'urgent' and 'soon' referrals who are waiting will be seen as priority over the routine referrals
3. average number of weeks wait includes all patients in (i) and (ii) above (ie. those immediately given an appointment date and those placed on a list prior to being provided an appointment date)
4. If a patient needs to undergo tests in preparation for their hospital appointment this can extend the time between referral and appointment