

DP 482/03 - 07

**Jane Hutt AM**  
Minister for Health and Social Services



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru  
Welsh Assembly Government

Cardiff Bay  
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Our Ref: WAQ29766

Val Lloyd AM  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
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30<sup>th</sup> November 2003

*Dear Val,*

You tabled the following Written Assembly Question

**Can the Minister make a statement on current waiting times for cancer treatment in comparison with 1997 pre devolution figures. (WAQ29766)**

I am afraid that overall waiting times for cancer treatment are not routinely monitored at present and so it is not possible to compare them with pre devolution figures.

That said, from 1997 there have been standards in place for the management of specific forms of cancer developed by the Cancer Services Co-ordinating Group (CSCG) and some of these relate to times to treatment. The CSCG have introduced a system of retrospective annual reporting by trusts against the standards, which includes some waiting times information. For example, the latest monitoring report covering 2001-02 shows that in the case of breast cancer, 82% of patients requiring surgical treatment were offered a treatment appointment within 15 or less working days from the time of their test results.

However, as part of the process of revising the present cancer standards work has been conducted on the length of time patients wait for cancer treatment using hospital admission data from the Patient Episode Data of Wales (PEDW). This information provides us with an indication of the length of wait experienced by patients for specific cancers. A summary of this data is in the table below.

The information shown represents those patients who were waiting for elective admission on the Elective Admission Waiting List (EAL).

It is important to note that, unlike the monthly waiting list figures, these figures do not take into account periods of waiting list suspension on either medical or social grounds, and as



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such these waits will be inflated slightly. These waits are simply the length of time from the date that it was decided to admit the patient, to their admission date.

The median wait in days denotes that half of the patients were treated within the days shown and the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile wait in days denotes that 90% of the patients were treated within those days shown. For example, of those patients who received treatment for gynecological cancers in 1999, half were treated within 13 days of the decision to admit, and 90% were treated within 34 days of the decision to admit.

Year	Gynae		Mastectomies		Upper GI		Urology	
	Median	90 <sup>th</sup> Percentile	Median	90 <sup>th</sup> Percentile	Median	90 <sup>th</sup> Percentile	Median	90 <sup>th</sup> Percentile
1997	13	34	11	26	9	36	16	49
1998	14	41	12	28	10	28	19	49
1999	14	48	12	29	9	37	18	47
2000	13	34	14	34	11	38	17	49
2001	16	45	12	32	11	44	20	63
2002	19	58	11	27	11	31	21	65

This compares with the standard for time to treatment in the CSCG's cancer standards for these particular cancers of:-

- Gynecological: "an appointment to discuss treatment options within 10 working days of the patient being given their definitive diagnosis";
- Breast: "an appointment to treatment within 15 working days of the patient being given their definitive diagnosis";
- Gastro-oesophageal (upper GI): this is not specified in the standards;
- Urological: "full staging and discussion with patient about definitive treatment within 20 working days of the patient being given their diagnosis".

I hope this is helpful.

Yours,

Jane