

Deputy Pdraig O Sullivan
Fianna Fáil
Leinster House
Kildare Street
Dublin 2

e. Padraig.osullivan@oireachtas.ie

18th November 2022

PQ: 55265/22: To ask the Minister for Health if he will provide an estimated timeframe to clear existing waiting lists for cancer screening and cancer treatment services; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy O'Sullivan,

Official National Treatment Purchase Fund (NTPF) definitions of a waiting list, with timelines of 0-3months, 3-6months, 6-12months etc., are typically not applicable to cancer patients. This is due to the result of the relatively short time frames between cancer patients being deemed ready to treat and commencing treatment. The NCCP therefore monitors access to cancer treatments by collecting Key Performance Indicator (KPI) data, which measures the proportion of patients who commence cancer treatment within the recommended timeframe from being deemed ready to treat. The recommended timeframes to commencement of treatment vary according to treatment modality.

Times to commencement of day case radiotherapy and systemic anti-cancer treatment are monitored monthly as part of the NCCP cancer services KPIs and we are kept informed of specific challenges via hospital management and clinical networks. At present, no delays are being reported for access to cancer surgeries. Challenges do arise in capacity to deliver ongoing treatments in specific areas, for example in relation to day ward capacity and staff recruitment. While mitigation measures are put in place, the solution requires our ongoing investment in the implementation of the National Cancer Strategy, to ensure a resilient service.

Please note the National Screening Service will respond separately through PQ55264/22 on matters relating to waiting lists for cancer screening services.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Caitríona McCarthy
Consultant in Public Health Medicine
National Cancer Control Programme