

CC/MMcN/MC

Email: pqmidwestacute@hse.ie

12th October 2022

Mr Michael McNamara TD,
Dáil Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2

PQs 45026 – 45030

*** To ask the Minister for Health if the UL Hospitals Group employs an outside company and agency to carry out post-mortems on its behalf; if any HSE-employed histopathologists conduct post-mortems for any such agencies; and if he will make a statement on the matter. -Michael McNamara**

***To ask the Minister for Health the level of radiology reporting undertaken by contracted companies within the UL Hospitals Group; if any HSE-employed consultants are undertaking radiology reporting for such private companies; and if he will make a statement on the matter. -Michael McNamara**

***To ask the Minister for Health the waiting times for post-mortem examinations at University Hospital Limerick; and if he will make a statement on the matter. -Michael McNamara**

***To ask the Minister for Health the waiting times for radiology reporting across all hospitals in the UL Hospitals Group for August 2021 and August 2022, in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter. -Michael McNamara**

Dear Deputy McNamara,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Questions which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

UL Hospitals Group employs 6 WTE consultant histopathologists. In addition, there are 2.8 WTE consultant histopathologists employed through a recruitment agency. Adult post-mortem services (coroner and diagnostic) are carried out by the agency histopathologists for UL Hospitals Group. These histopathologists have been in place for a number of years and work on a six week rolling basis to ensure that there is continuity of service. At present, paediatric post-mortems are arranged on a case by case basis with specialised histopathologists from other hospital groups. In addition, peri-natal pathology services are in place in collaboration with South/Southwest Hospital Group.

UL Hospitals Group is not aware of HSE histopathologists carrying out corner post-mortem services for outside agencies.

The below table provides details of radiology reporting undertaken by contracted companies and by radiologists from University Hospital Limerick from January - September 2022 across the following modalities – CT, MRI, Ultrasound and General X-ray.

Examination	Reported by External Radiologist	UHL Radiologist	Total
CT	1,098	20,476	21,574
MRI	1,584	7,808	9,392
Ultrasound	1,527	12,606	14,133
X-Ray	20,370	80,036	100,406

UL Hospitals Group is aware that some HSE employed radiologists carry out work for external providers and have a private practice. While UL Hospitals Group has service level agreements in place with private companies to provide a reporting service, UL Hospitals Group does not hold details of the consultants employed by these private companies.

The wait time for post-mortem and patient release is between 24-48 hours from Monday to Friday. This can extend to 72-96 hours over a weekend period.

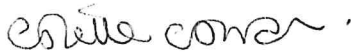
The below tables provide details of the median inpatient and outpatient turnaround times from imaging to reporting for CT, MRI, Ultrasound and X-Ray. As outlined below there was an increase in turnaround times in August 2022 particularly for CT. This was due to a reduction in the number of consultant radiologists available for reporting due to retirements/resignations.

Modality	Inpatient			
	August 2021		August 2022	
	Volume	Median Turnaround time Imaged to reporting	Volume	Median Turnaround time Imaged to reporting
CT	1727	0 d 1 hr 9 mn	1881	0 d 1 hr 17 mn
MRI	360	0 d 1 hr 25 mn	445	0 d 1 hr 46 mn
Ultrasound	658	0 d 1 hr 5 mn	747	0 d 1 hr 40 mn
X-ray	7655	0 d 21 hr 58 mn	7793	1 d 10 hr 34 mn

Modality	Outpatient			
	August 2021		August 2022	
	Volume	Median Turnaround time Imaged to reporting	Volume	Median Turnaround time Imaged to reporting
CT	558	0 d 3 hr 18 mn	551	2 d 1 hr 1 mn
MRI	748	0 d 23 hr 35 mn	637	0 d 23 hr 48 mn
Ultrasound	816	0 d 1 hr 55 mn	845	0 d 1 hr 57 mn
X-ray	3695	11 d 18 hr 16 mn	3079	8 d 19 hr 1 mn

I trust this clarifies the position, please contact me if you have any further queries.

Yours sincerely,



Prof Colette Cowan
Chief Executive Officer
UL Hospitals Group