



Oifig an Stiúirhóra Náisiúnta
Géaroibríochtaí

Aonad 4A, Áras Dargan, An Ceantar Theas,
An Bóthar Míleata, Cill Mhaighneann, Baile
Átha Cliath 8, D08 NN9V

Office of the National Director
Acute Operations

Unit 4a, the Dargan Building, Heuston
South Quarter, Military Road,
Kilmainham, Dublin 8, D08 NN9V

www.hse.ie
@hselive

t 01 795 9959
e acute.operations@hse.ie

Deputy Michael Lowry
Dáil Éireann
Leinster House
Dublin 2

6th March, 2023

PQ 5312/23 - To ask the Minister for Health the average waiting time persons have to wait in County Tipperary CHO3 and CHO5 before learning their biopsy histology results (details supplied); the HSE policy on waiting times for histology results and if CHO3 and CH05 is compliant with these policies; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Lowry,

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

We have been advised of the following from the relevant hospital groups that cover the regions you have mentioned;

South/South West Hospital Group

Pathology is a 24/7 clinical service, which carries out clinical interpretative investigations on specimens from patients. It is central to the diagnosis, management, and treatment of disease. The pathology services for the South-East area are located at four sites within the region.

The vast majority of the service is located at University Hospital Waterford (UHW) with all pathology consultants based at this location. The regional services for Microbiology and Histopathology are based in UHW and all samples are sent directly there from the other Model 3 hospitals, which includes Tipperary University Hospital.

The Histopathology Laboratory provides a broad surgical pathology diagnostic service ranging from complex cancer resections to small skin specimens from primary care practices. UHW Histopathology Laboratory supports the work of the National Cancer Control Programme providing diagnostics for a variety of rapid access and speciality disease programmes.

The demand on Histology Services at UHW greatly exceeds capacity with an ever-increasing workload with rises in complex/cancer cases. In respect of histology results, urgent samples are being prioritised and are not impacted. UHW is experiencing a continuing backlog in the reporting of non-urgent histology cases. The average waiting time for non-urgent histology cases from Tipperary University Hospital is approximately 11 weeks.



Work is underway to reduce a backlog in the reporting times for routine histopathology specimens in South East Regional Laboratory Service based in University Hospital Waterford (UHW). All urgent samples have been, and continue to be prioritised and processed without delay.

A Safety Incident Management Team has been established by the two hospital groups in the region. This team are overseeing and supporting UHW to ensure that the backlog is cleared as quickly as possible and to ensure that patients receive all the appropriate communication, care and treatment required

University of Limerick Hospital Group

If a biopsy is deemed urgent by the requesting clinician, the current average wait time for a result is between 5 and 7 days.

For routine endoscopic biopsies, the current average wait time is 10 days.

In respect of other routine biopsies, there is currently a backlog for reporting histology results at UL Hospitals Group. The current wait time for reporting in these cases is between 3 and 4 months. This is due to staffing challenges at consultant level.

There is currently one vacant consultant histopathology post. We are actively recruiting to fill this post. We are also exploring a range of options to address the backlog in routine biopsies described above.

I trust this is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Nessa Lynch', written over a horizontal line.

Nessa Lynch
General Manager
Acute Operations