



Rannan na nOspideil Ghearmhíochaine  
Aonad 4A – Áras Dargan  
An Ceantar Theas  
An Bothar Mileata  
Cill Mhaighneann  
BÁC 8

Acute Operations  
Health Service Executive  
Unit 4A - The Dargan Building  
Heuston South Quarter  
Military Road  
Kilmainham  
Dublin 8.

7th February 2023

Deputy Neasa Hourigan,  
Dáil Éireann  
Leinster House  
Dublin 2.

***PQ: 3590/23 To ask the Minister for Health the number of persons who were waiting for an urgent colonoscopy by waiting time period for each quarter in each of the years 2019 to 2022, respectively.***

Dear Deputy Hourigan,

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.

**Response:**

In the context of your request above, The National Service Plan target in relation to people who require an urgent colonoscopy is that no new patients will wait greater than four weeks for access. Ref: HSE Service Plan. <https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/who/hse-strategy-and-research-team/hse-national-service-plan-2022.pdf>

The target is monitored on a weekly basis for all sites nationally and forms part of ongoing performance engagement with Hospital Groups and Hospitals and specific action plans are in place in hospitals that continue to experience breaches in the urgent colonoscopy key performance indicator.

There has been significant impacts on the delivery of services within the timeframe as set out on Endoscopy access, details are provided below in relation to same:

- In 2020, 2021 and into quarter 1 of 2022, endoscopy services significantly impacted by Covid-19 through use of the units to support COVID/non-COVID pathways, redeployment of staff to cover other duties and use of endoscopy beds spaces to cope with surges in emergency demand.
- Endoscopy services were also significantly, and disproportionality affected by the cyber-attack in May 2021 when their electronic reporting system was taken offline. Work in to restore backups of patient reports and procedure images in 20 (of 37) endoscopy services continued throughout 2021.
- Towards the end of 2021, endoscopy services once again experienced the impact of Covid-19 with the onset of the Omicron variant, in addition to the ongoing impact of the Delta variant.
- Sick leave due to Covid-19 infection had an impact on the health service generally including GI endoscopy services. This is in addition to staff redeployment to priority areas (e.g., emergency services).

- The isolation period for close contacts (as per December 2021 rules) resulted in staff being unavailable for clinical work for a period.

The National Clinical Programme for Endoscopy are working with Clinicians, Hospital Groups and Hospitals on a range of initiatives in terms of care provision. These initiatives will create alternative treatment pathways and support optimisation of available access for patients who require both urgent and routine access to endoscopy services.

Number of new people waiting greater than four weeks for access to an urgent colonoscopy is provided in the table below.

Quarter 1			Quarter 2			Quarter 3			Quarter 4		
Jan-19	Feb-19	Mar-19	Apr-19	May-19	Jun-19	Jul-19	Aug-19	Sep-19	Oct-19	Nov-19	Dec-19
6	39	0	16	80	7	2	19	6	5	25	4
Jan-20	Feb-20	Mar-20	Apr-20	May-20	Jun-20	Jul-20	Aug-20	Sep-20	Oct-20	Nov-20	Dec-20
2	0	328	1,408	1,066	513	557	598	450	679	509	365
Jan-21	Feb-21	Mar-21	Apr-21	May-21	Jun-21	Jul-21	Aug-21	Sep-21	Oct-21	Nov-21	Dec-21
629	441	279	360	*	*	240 **	431	332	513	323	385
Jan-22	Feb-22	Mar-22	Apr-22	May-22	Jun-22	Jul-22	Aug-22	Sep-22	Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22
288	116	235	214	173	203	235	215	120	120	132	126

\* No data is available for May and June 2021 due to the impact of the cyber-attack.

\*\* July 2021 is not a full data set; data was not available for three hospitals therefore 240 breaches is not the actual total.

I trust that this answers your question.

Yours sincerely,



**Trish King**  
**General Manager**  
**Acute Operations**

**Appendix I —Number of new people waiting greater than four weeks for access to an urgent colonoscopy**

Quarter 1			Quarter 2			Quarter 3			Quarter 4		
Jan-19	Feb-19	Mar-19	Apr-19	May-19	Jun-19	Jul-19	Aug-19	Sep-19	Oct-19	Nov-19	Dec-19
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