

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES
BY DEPUTY G.P. SOUTHERN OF ST. HELIER
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 18th JUNE 2019**

Question

Given the published average hospital waiting times for ophthalmology of 6 weeks, will the Minister explain whether some people have had to wait for more than 12 weeks for a simple cataract operation and, if so, why; and will he breakdown the 'average' waiting times into average waiting times for emergency procedures and routine ones?

Answer

An average is a number expressing a *typical* value in a set of data. In this case the average is the mean value, which is calculated by dividing the sum of the waiting times by the number of patients seen. Some patients will have shorter waits and others will have longer waits.

Patients seen for a first outpatient appointment in ophthalmology in March 2019 had waited an average (mean) of 6 weeks from referral. This varied between a minimum of 0 weeks and a maximum of 49 weeks.

Patients waiting for an inpatient/daycare procedure are categorised as Urgent, Soon or Routine according to the clinical priority. The table below shows the average (mean) time patients waited for admission to Jersey General Hospital (JGH) for a procedure in ophthalmology in the last 13 months (May 2018 to May 2019) as well as the minimum and maximum waiting times in that time period.

Waiting Times for Inpatient Procedure in Ophthalmology, Patients Admitted to JGH May 2018 – May 2019

Clinician Priority	Average (mean) Wait (Weeks)	Minimum Wait (Weeks)	Maximum Wait (Weeks)
Routine	18	2	48
Soon	8	0	31
Urgent	4	0	33

Variation in waiting times is due to a number of factors, including but not limited to:

- Clinical priority
- Number of referrals (demand)
- Number of operating slots available (supply)
- Patients cancelling or not attending their appointments.