

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES
BY DEPUTY S.Y. MÉZEC OF ST. HELIER
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 1st DECEMBER 2015**

Question

How long are the current waiting lists for cataract operations? How long have waiting lists been, on average, each year for the past 5 years and what, if anything, is being done to try to reduce waiting lists?

Answer

Ophthalmology is a particularly busy service with over 1,000 patients a month being seen in the clinics and surgery taking place on 21 theatre lists each month.

The specialist expertise of the three consultants now in post means that a significant number of patients requiring specialist procedures can now be treated on-Island. Fewer than 5 patients a month are now being referred to the UK; as recently as Spring 2014, this figure was around 20. Many of these procedures are urgent or the result of emergencies and they always take priority over routine cataract procedures.

As a result, average waiting times for routine cataract operations have increased. While no new investment is planned for the ophthalmology service during 2016, the department will be reviewing processes, systems and procedures to improve efficiency and to deliver reductions in waiting times.

Average waiting times are shown in the table below:

Year	Number of cataract procedures	Average wait in weeks
2011 July-Dec	171	15.09
2012	560	15.66
2013	573	8.57
2014	528	6.12
2015 Jan-Oct	435	9.90

Note: The patient administration system (TRAK) was introduced part way through 2011; information before this point is not readily available.