

2024.12.10

**3.4 Deputy R.S. Kovacs of St. Saviour of the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding healthcare departments with waiting lists exceeding 6 months (OQ.248/2024):**

Will the Minister advise which healthcare departments currently have waiting lists exceeding 6 months for outpatient appointments, and what work has been undertaken, or is being considered, to address these waiting times?

**Deputy T.J.A. Binet of St. Saviour (The Minister for Health and Social Services):**

At the end of November, departments that had a median waiting time of greater than 6 months are clinical genetics, bariatric medicine, and gastroenterology. Clinical genetics, which is a screening service, is being addressed through the application of new software. All patients referred into the service who have waited over 52 weeks have now received a family history questionnaire to complete and return. Responses are then uploaded into new software which determines what level of risk the patient has of developing breast cancer. Those at moderate risk or high risk are offered further appointments, with those at low risk discharged from the service. It is expected that by the end of quarter 2 2025 there will be no patients waiting longer than 6 months for this screening service. The bariatric pathway, which is all pre-surgery, is also being reviewed to help reduce waiting lists. The gastroenterology service is being addressed through similar initiatives and additional staff. The waiting list initiatives have been provided throughout 2024 by an external provider who is also supporting endoscopy capacity. Additional output clinics have also been undertaken and a new I.B.D. (inflammatory bowel disease) nurse has been recruited.

**3.4.1 Deputy R.S. Kovacs:**

What steps is the Minister taking to ensure that the waiting times published on the website are consistently accurate and that patients are not informed of a longer wait only after they have already been waiting for a significant period?

**Deputy T.J.A. Binet:**

I think I have outlined some of the work that is going on. I was not aware of the second part of that question happening. Now that I am, I shall certainly inquire into it and deal with it as best I can.

**3.4.2 Deputy T.A. Coles of St. Helier South:**

Can the Minister advise what notice patients are given if their waiting time is going to exceed a certain period?

**Deputy T.J.A. Binet:**

I cannot provide that information.

**3.4.3 Deputy T.A. Coles:**

Does the Minister agree that if there are long waiting times it would be good for patients to receive acknowledgement that they have a pending appointment within the system rather than having to revert back to G.P.s (general practitioners) to ensure acknowledgement of their appointment with outpatients?

**Deputy T.J.A. Binet:**

These are all fairly fine points of detail. There is a great deal of work going on in a number of different departments that relate to all this sort of thing. It is very difficult for me to provide specific answers to very detailed questions of that nature.

**3.4.4 Deputy R.S. Kovacs:**

What additional resources or strategies is the Minister considering to reduce even further waiting times for both outpatient appointments and diagnostic tests and to ensure these measures are communicated effectively to the public?

**Deputy T.J.A. Binet:**

We are not applying any extra resources because we simply do not have any. The work we are doing is the work we are doing, and I have done the best I can to explain in overall terms. If the Deputy would want to meet with any specific clinician in relation to any specific department, I would be very happy to arrange for her to do so.