

Our ref: FOI 1529

24/03/2023

## **FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 – INFORMATION REQUEST**

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**1. What was the waiting time for smear test results in 2019?**

**Answer:** In 2019 93.7% of cervical smear tests were reported within 4 weeks. This figure is from the date the smear was taken to date of the final report authorised.

**2. What is the current waiting time for smear test results? How has COVID-19 affected these waiting times and when does the Trust hope for the service to return to normal?**

**Answer:** The standard in Northern Ireland that 80% of cervical screening samples are reported within four weeks of the sample being taken to report issued is not being met. The SHSCT Cellular Pathology Laboratory can confirm that currently <10% of cervical smear tests are reported within 4 weeks.

Currently our average cervical cytology sample reporting time is 14 weeks.

COVID-19 has not affected these waiting times.

The department have put in place, from 1/3/23, HPV co-testing the backlog. This will triage and prioritise HPV positive patients. Urgent samples, including patients with symptoms are also prioritised.

Service users have been notified about this change.

**3. What is the current waiting time for a colposcopy appointment?**

**Answer:** Please see attached Spreadsheet.

**4. Has COVID-19 affected these waiting times?**

**Answer:** Information not held.

**5. What is the current waiting time for treatments such as LLETZ and cone biopsy? How many people are on this waiting list?**

**Answer:** Patients who get a LLETZ or Cone Biopsy procedure performed, get this performed at a Colposcopy appointment. The Trust are unable to provide data on waiting times specifically for LLETZ and Cone Biopsy procedures as the Procedure is not recorded until after the patient has attended the Colposcopy appointment. Waits for LLETZ and Cone Biopsy procedures will be included in the figures that have been provided on the attached spreadsheet.

**6. England, Scotland and Wales now use HPV primary screening as the testing method on samples collected at cervical screenings, does the Trust have any plans to introduce this type of screening?**

**Answer:** The Implementation of Primary HPV testing within the Northern Ireland Cervical Screening Programme is currently under discussion and planning with Northern Ireland Pathology Network, the PHA and the DOH.

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