

FOI 1550

20.04.2023

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 – INFORMATION REQUEST

We would be grateful if you could detail the waiting times for smear test results for each of the last five years within the Southern Health & Social Care Trust.

On 3rd April 2023 the following statistical information was provided:

In 17/18 approximately 97% of samples met the Turnaround target of 28 days,
18/19 it was 94%
19/20 it was 90%
20/21 it was 85%
21/22 it was 38%
And currently is only 8%

The current average waiting time is 13 weeks

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 17 weeks.

To mitigate the backlog risk:

The department have put in place, from 1/3/23, HPV co-testing the backlog. To date, SHSCT has co tested 5,100 smear tests. This will triage and prioritise HPV positive patients. Urgent samples, clinical (including Colposcopy) and symptomatic patients are also prioritised.

We have employed a locum who has been signed off for independent reporting on 12/4/23. We are actively looking for further locum staff.

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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