

Thursday 4 May 2023

Waiting times for procedures report

Dear Sheila,

Thank you for sending across the report on waiting times. I have shared this with our Executive Team. One of our big priorities is to do all that we can to reduce waiting times. We want to make sure people have access to the care they need as quickly as possible.

Because of COVID-19, waiting lists have got longer across the NHS. As a Trust, our waiting lists are actually some of the best in the region. We are already meeting the national target for people who need planned care. This asks the NHS to make sure nobody waits more than 65 weeks for their care by March next year.

We have also made sure that people with cancer or with an urgent need get treatment quickly. But this has meant that other people who need more routine treatment, have waited longer.

We know we still have lots to do. We are working very hard to reduce our waiting lists even further. The tables below show how STSFT is doing. It shows the national standards on the left and how we are doing in the middle column. It also shows the how the NHS nationally is doing on the right.

National standards	STSFT*	NHS national*
92% of patients get treatment in 18 weeks or less.	78%	58.5%
93% of patients get an appointment in two weeks if their GP thinks they may have cancer.	92%*	86%
85% of patients get their first cancer treatment in 62 days or less.	69%*	58%
We let 75% of patients know if they have cancer or not, within 28 days.	71%*	75%

*(year to date from April 2022 up to February 2023).

We are also working hard to speed up access to diagnostic tests. Our new Integrated Diagnostic Centre in South Tyneside will help us with this.

When it comes to access to mental health services, our performance is very good. STSFT provides the NHS Talking Therapy service in South Tyneside. The table below shows how we are doing. This means patients are getting good access and not having to wait too long.

National standards	STSFT year to date (April 2022 to March 2023)
75% of people start treatment in 6 weeks or less.	99.90%
95% of people start treatment in 18 weeks or less.	100%

We know that behind all of these numbers is a person and a family. Any delays in care can have a huge impact on peoples' lives. We will always try to be open and honest so that people know how long they may have to wait.

There is a website which shows the average waiting times at STSFT. This also provides advice for patients while they wait for treatment:

[South Tyneside and Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust – My Planned Care NHS](#)

It is often difficult for us to keep in touch as much as patients would like us to. This is because we have thousands of people under our care. That is why we want to make sure people can understand the information we give them at the start. STSFT is now the only Trust in the region to have a Health Literacy Team. This will help us improve the information we give to patients. We want to make sure it meets the local reading age. This will take us some time to work through, but we have started this work.

I hope this is a helpful response.

Yours sincerely
Liz



Liz Davies
Director of Communications
South Tyneside and Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust