

Press release

Monthly waiting list figures - 9 June 2023

From [Department of Health \(/en/organisation/departments-of-health/\)](/en/organisation/departments-of-health/)

Published on 9 June 2023

Last updated on 14 June 2023

New hospital waiting list [figures published today \(https://www.ntpf.ie/home/nwld.htm\)](https://www.ntpf.ie/home/nwld.htm) by the National Treatment Purchase Fund (NTPF) show, as at the end of May, that targeted activity under the Waiting List Action Plan is running significantly ahead of target. This progress, however, has been offset by a higher-than-expected additions to waiting lists. As a result, we now have 497,090 people on the Active Waiting Lists (inpatient / day case, GI Scopes and outpatients) waiting longer than the Sláintecare maximum wait times, which is a 1% increase in comparison to the end of April.

As at the end of May 2023:

- 51,875 people are currently exceeding the 12-week inpatient / day case (IPDC) target which is approximately the same as the end of April
- 10,465 people are exceeding the 12-week GI Scope target which is a 2% decrease compared to the end of April
- 434,750 people are exceeding the 10-week outpatient (OPD) target, which is a 1% increase compared to the end of April

The total number of patients removed from the OPD, IPDC and GI Scope waiting lists during the first four months of 2023 was c.38,000 (c.10%) higher than target, while additions to waiting lists in the same period were c.48,000 (c.10%) higher than projected. Additions to waiting lists are also c.70,000k (c.15%) higher than the same period in 2022, and c.92,000 (20%) higher than the same period in 2019.

As expected, our scheduled care waiting lists have come under pressure in the first quarter of 2023, but it is expected that the 30 actions outlined in the 2023 Waiting List Action Plan will begin to have a positive impact during Q2 as the post-pandemic and winter pressures on our hospitals hopefully begin to ease.

Like many other countries, Ireland has experienced an increased level of waiting list additions since the start of this year, that is unfortunately more than negating the increased levels of activity being delivered by the Health Service Executive (HSE) and NTPF during the same period.

The HSE attributes the higher than anticipated additions to waiting lists to several factors, including post-pandemic pent-up demand, and highlight it is also the case internationally, for example, the NHS in Britain is seeing higher additions compared to previous years.

The [latest hospital activity report published monthly by the HSE is now available online.](https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/who/acute-hospitals-division/hospital-activity/hospital-activity.html) (<https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/who/acute-hospitals-division/hospital-activity/hospital-activity.html>). This gives regular insight into acute activity levels, with millions of patients being seen and treated annually within our hospital system alone.

For the most recently available 12 months of data, there were 3.4 million outpatient and 1.7 million in-patient / day case attendances. In addition to this planned ('scheduled') care, our hospital system also treated 1.6 million patients during this same period in emergency ('unscheduled') care, which represents a 10% increase on 2019 (pre-pandemic) levels and reflects the ongoing pressure on hospitals from flu surges and increased Emergency Department (ED) attendances.

Such pressures have had the expected knock-on impact on scheduled care in many of our hospitals in the first months of this year, which has resulted in some waiting lists temporarily increasing. However, there are many examples of individual hospitals delivering significant improvements in waiting times despite such challenges.

For example, over the past year, CHI Crumlin have reduced the number of patients waiting over 18 months for an OPD appointment by 37% from 5,780 to 3,666, and those waiting over 12 months for an IPDC procedure by 24%, from 1,165 to 884. Our Lady's Hospital Navan have reduced the number of patients waiting over 18 months for an

OPD appointment by 66% from 2,362 to 792, and Louth County Hospital have reduced the number of patients waiting over 18 months for an OPD appointment by 100%, from 235 to 1.

Notes

The 2017 Houses of the Oireachtas Sláintecare report recommended maximum wait times of no more than 12 weeks for an inpatient / day case (IPDC) procedure or GI Scope and 10 weeks for a new outpatient (OPD) appointment.

The publication of May waiting list and activity figures by the NTPF and HSE follows the launch of the 2023 Waiting List Action Plan on 7 March by the Minister for Health. The 2023 Plan continues the multi-annual approach to addressing waiting lists that commenced in Q4 2021 and details 30 actions focused on delivering capacity, reforming scheduled care, and enabling scheduled care reform. The 2023 Plan will fund the HSE and NTPF to reduce waiting lists by a further 10% this year as well as continuing to significantly reduce waiting times towards the Sláintecare recommended targets.

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