

Ref no: 219240316
 From: Commercial
 Date: 15/04/16
 Subject: Waiting times for surgical procedures

REQUEST

The Patients Association is a national independent health and social care charity which listens to the experiences of patients and speaks up for change. We continue to hear via our Helpline and through our own research that there are regional variations in waiting times for certain elective surgical procedures. We have undertaken activities to monitor this situation over the previous six years, and continue to do so.

In response to these continued reports, we are carrying out an investigation into the waiting times for 9 procedures across NHS trusts in England. These procedures are:

- Hip
- Knee
- Hernia
- Adenoid
- Gallstone
- Tonsillectomy
- Cataract
- Bariatric
- Gender reassignment

Please refer to the procedure codes for each operation category.

RESPONSE

Name of Trust	St Helens & Knowsley Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust	
Name of Trust's CCG	St Helens	

Freedom of Information: Elective Surgery

1. Which Regional/Area Team does your hospital belong to?

Please tick **ONE** of the following options:

North East	
North West	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
West Midlands	
East Midlands	
Yorkshire and the Humber	
East of England	
South West	
South East	
London	

2. Please set out the number of individual elective procedures that took place in your Trust in 2015 for the following categories –

Procedure	Number
Hip Replacement	282
Knee Replacement	372
Hernia Operations	607
Adenoid Operations	7
Gallstone Operations	567
Tonsillectomies	215
Cataract Operations	1728
Bariatric Surgery	0
Gender Reassignment Surgery	0

3. Please set out the mean average waiting time (in days), within your Trust, for each of the following procedures in 2015 – Please also include referral to treatment (RTT) waiting time

Procedure	Average Waiting Time	Referral to Treatment
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	(Days)	
Hip Replacement	116	105
Knee Replacement	116	103
Hernia Operations	81	99
Adenoid Operations	79	116
Gallstone Operations	76	87
Tonsillectomies	83	114
Cataract Operations	79	92
Bariatric Surgery	N/A	N/A
Gender Reassignment Surgery	N/A	N/A

The wait for RTT appears less than the average waiting days for hip and knee replacement due to patients on Active Monitoring and also Clock pauses for social reasons between January 2015 and September 2015. Our patient access policy stipulates that if a patient is not fit at OP due to co-morbidities, the patient should be returned to their GP until fit to proceed. However, clinical decisions are made on a patient by patient basis to include on the waiting list and to apply appropriate active monitoring until fit, and then to proceed with a date for the procedure. This enables us to monitor the patients condition whilst reducing inconvenience and multiple appointments for patients.

4. Please set out the number of patients who waited over 18 weeks, within your Trust, for each of the following procedures in 2015 –

Procedure	Number of people who waited over 18 weeks
Hip Replacement	43
Knee Replacement	52
Hernia Operations	71
Adenoid Operations	1
Gallstone Operations	52
Tonsillectomies	36
Cataract Operations	147
Bariatric Surgery	N/A
Gender Reassignment Surgery	N/A

5. If a patients needs were to change while on the Trust's waiting list is there a process to recognise this?

Yes	✓
No	

If yes, please describe

All patients undergoing general anaesthesia are assessed at the Pre-operative Assessment Clinic and if required to be reviewed by a Consultant Anaesthetist this is undertaken at this point. This is to ensure that patients are fit for surgery, and if further investigations or support is required this is also provided.

All patients waiting above 18 weeks for surgery are reviewed by clinicians to ensure clinically that the patient is still safe to remain on the waiting list, or whether they need to be reviewed further in an outpatient setting. Patients who contact the Admissions Department and advise that they are concerned about a change in their condition are reviewed by the Clinician and if required are brought back to clinic for review before continuing with surgery.

6. What number of patient's surgeries were cancelled on the day in the calendar year of 2015?

345 Reportable and 3613 Non-Reportable
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7. Please tick the most common reasons surgery is cancelled on the day?

Scheduling errors – i.e. lack of theatre time, surgeon unavailable	
Patient not prepped – i.e. not fasted	
Equipment shortages and/or lack of beds	
Cancellation due to inadequate preoperative evaluation	
Patient failing to attend or operation no longer necessary	
Emergency case superseding the elective schedule	
Medical reasons – on-going infection, illness of family member	
Low Staffing levels	

Most Common Reportable reason = “Ran out of theatre time - complications with previous patient/complex previous case”
Most Common Non-Reportable reason = “Patient Did Not Attend”

Other, please specify

8. Have you implemented any improvement programs to improve access to meeting the (recommended) waiting time?

Theatre Improvements	✓	Session utilisation, session start and finish times constantly under review
Admin / booking projects	✓	Additional staffing employed to book ahead
Pre-op assessment	✓	Capacity and demand project undertaken. This is an on-going piece of work
Diagnostic improvement	X	N/A
Separation of elective and emergency beds	✓	Dedicated Clean Elective Orthopaedic Ward on Whiston site
Communication with patients	✓	

Other, please specify

9. Have you implemented any bans on out of area referrals for any types of elective procedures?

Yes	
No	✓

If yes, for which procedures?

10. Do you notify patients of their rights under the NHS Constitution when the 18 week limit has been missed?

Yes	✓
No	

If Yes, how?

The patient access policy specifies our patients' rights under the NHS constitution and is published on the Trusts public internet site (policy is currently being reviewed).

Due to the effect of high levels of NEL activity over winter and repeated periods of industrial action by junior medical staff, all individual outpatient and inpatient patient booklets are now in the process of being updated to include patient rights and options under the NHS Constitution in the event that patients wait longer than 18 weeks. These will be made available to individual patients for all appointments and admissions within the next 12 weeks.

11. On average how many extra days or weeks did patients wait for surgery beyond the 18 week limit?

Procedure	Number
Hip Replacement	62
Knee Replacement	58
Hernia Operations	29
Adenoid Operations	32
Gallstone Operations	22
Tonsillectomies	47
Cataract Operations	30
Bariatric Surgery	N/A
Gender Reassignment Surgery	N/A