

NEWSLETTER

For Elected Representatives

Managing Waiting Time Enquiries More Efficiently



My Waiting Times NI

We recognise that waiting times for health and social care services continue to be significant and remain one of the most frequent concerns raised by you and your constituents. We appreciate and share the frustration this causes while waiting for care.

Given the high volume of waiting time enquiries currently being received into the Trust, we would like to highlight a helpful resource that can often provide timely answers without the need to contact frontline services directly.



Access Belfast Trust Waiting Times:

<https://online.hscni.net/my-waiting-times-ni/bhsct/>

The 'My Waiting Times' website, hosted by the Department of Health / HSCNI Strategic Planning and Performance Group (SPPG), provides you and your constituents with up-to-date, publicly available information on waiting times across a wide range of services, including:

- Outpatient appointments
- Inpatient procedures
- Day-case treatments

An Important First Step

We encourage you and your constituents, wherever possible, to use this website as a first step when checking waiting times, as it provides the most up-to-date and consistent information available.

In many cases, this information can answer common queries quickly and clearly, without the need for further follow-up.

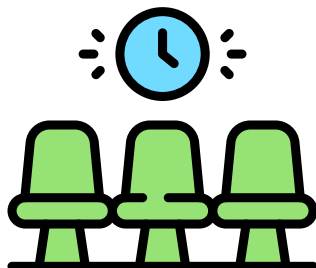
Why Using the Website Matters

The Public Liaison Service works closely with clinical and operational teams to respond to enquiries. Many responses require input from busy clinical and operational staff who are also delivering direct patient care, meaning time spent answering queries can inadvertently reduce capacity to see patients.

By checking the waiting times website in advance:

- Constituents can access information immediately
- Elected Representatives may receive answers without delay
- Frontline and clinical staff time is protected
- Capacity is preserved for patient care and urgent clinical matters

Using this resource helps us help you, while supporting the safe and effective running of services.



When to Contact the Public Liaison Service

If the information you need cannot be found on the My Waiting Times website, or if there are specific concerns you have about an individual patient, please do not hesitate to contact us.



We recognise some of your enquiries will still require individual follow-up, particularly where:

- There are complex or exceptional circumstances
- Specific patient issues or concerns need to be raised
- Further clarification or support is required

In these situations, we still remain your first point of contact within the Trust and we remain available and committed to providing you with the assistance you need as quickly as we can.

We continue to value the constructive and ongoing engagement with you, our locally Elected Representatives.



Tel: (028) 9504 5888

Email: PublicLiaison@BelfastTrust.hscni.net



My Care Matters

My Care: Digital Access That's Making a Difference



*Sign up
or find out more
by scanning the
QR Code*

Over 300,000 people across Northern Ireland are now signed up to My Care, helping them feel more connected to their health and care.

Digital tools like My Care give patients timely access to key information, including appointments and updates, supporting safer, more connected healthcare and helping them stay informed about their care.

If your constituents are not already signed up, they can take this simple step to support their own care and wellbeing.



Find out more at: <https://dhcni.hscni.net/my-care>



Working Together



Thank you for your continued support and understanding.

By making use of digital tools such as My Care and the My Waiting Times website, we can better work together to support:

- Quicker access to information
- More effective use of Trust resources
- Reduced pressure on already stretched services and staff.

This helps patients access the right information, at the right time, in the right way.

If patients can't attend their appointment:

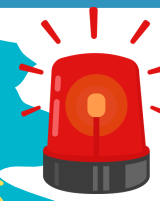
CANCEL IT!

If your constituent is unable to attend their appointment, they should communicate this to the Outpatients Appointments Office as soon as possible so the appointment slot can be offered to another patient. They will be given another appointment in line with the Integrated Elective Access Protocol.

If they do not attend without telling the Trust in advance (Did Not Attend - DNA), they may be discharged and referred back to their GP. If they still need to be seen, they should contact the Outpatients Appointments Office within four weeks of discharge to request another appointment.

Each missed appointment costs the Trust around £250 and prevents other patients from being seen, so it is vital your constituents attend or cancel in advance.





Release to Rescue

Getting Ambulances Back to Communities

Release to Rescue got underway last week, introducing a maximum two-hour handover time at Emergency Departments across Northern Ireland.



This initiative is designed to ensure ambulances can return more quickly to local communities, helping patients who urgently need care and reducing long ambulance waits.

Release to Rescue is a collaborative approach agreed by all HSC Trusts, SPPG and the Regional Coordination Centre, placing patient safety at its core. No patient should wait longer than two hours outside an Emergency Department; once this threshold is reached, a formal handover allows ambulance crews to return to responding to emergency calls.

By improving patient flow through hospitals and supporting timely transfers and discharges where clinically appropriate, Release to Rescue aims to provide safer, more effective care, while also supporting staff wellbeing.

Belfast Trust is working closely with health and social care partners, and welcomes the support of Elected Representatives in sharing accurate information with constituents as we work together to keep emergency care moving safely across the system.



May Awareness Spotlight



Mental Health Awareness Week (11th - 17th May 2026)

Next week is Mental Health Awareness Week, which provides an opportunity to highlight the importance of mental wellbeing and early access to support.

Belfast Trust continues to work alongside partners to promote mental health services and digital resources that help people seek information and support at the right time.

We encourage you and your constituents to talk openly about mental health and wellbeing.

Support is available locally, including free courses through the Belfast Recovery College, helping people build resilience, confidence and coping skills.

Find out what support is available in your area: <https://belfasttrust.hscni.net/service/belfast-recovery-college/recovery-college-programme/>

