

Turnaround times

The Royal College of Pathologists, in their document "Key performance indicators - proposals for implementation - July 2013 " state "provisional expectations are that 80% of cases would be reported within seven calendar days and 90% of all cases are reported within ten calendar days."

NHS England and NHS improvement (NHSEI) have also set similar benchmarks of 90% within 10 days for patients on a cancer pathway. The Cellular Pathology department formally audits specimen turnaround times against RCPATH and NHSEI benchmarks on a monthly basis.

When these benchmarks cannot be achieved the laboratory publishes locally agreed turnaround times (in line with NHSEI guidance of achievement of 95% of locally agreed targets) to ensure requesting Clinicians have defined expectations of results reporting for patient management. Whenever possible care is taken to provide timely diagnostic support to those patients on cancer pathways, this information should be noted by clinicians when requesting examination.

The Cellular Pathology department will continue to strive to deliver the RCPATH and NHSEI benchmarks.

The department reports turnaround time directly to screening services such as NHSCSP and BCSP.

Larger specimens, such as breasts and colectomies, require longer fixation and often take an extra day or two. Additional procedures such as special stains and immunocytochemistry will also extend the time taken to produce a final report. If appropriate, a provisional report may be issued pending the results of further procedures.

Current published turnaround times to RCPATH NHSEI benchmarks:

Specimen type	Turnaround time
All specimens	≥80% reported in 7 calendar days
All specimens	≥90% reported in 10 calendar days
Locally agreed turnaround time met	≥ 95%

Current published turnaround times for screening programmes:

Specimen type	Turnaround time
Bowel Cancer Screening Program (BCSP)	90% reported in 7 calendar days
	100% reported in 10 calendar days
Cervical Histology cases	80% reported in 7 calendar days
	90% reported in 10 calendar days

Current published turnaround time for outsourced reporting:

Supplier of diagnostic reporting	Turnaround time
Outsourced histology reporting	≥ 95% 21 calendar days
Outsourced Non-Gynae reporting	≥ 95% 21 calendar days

Current published locally agreed turnaround times:

Specimen type	Turnaround time
Non-Gynae cases	≥ 90% reported in 21 calendar days
Breast biopsy	≥ 90% reported in 14 calendar days
Urology biopsy (not template prostate)	≥ 90% reported in 14 calendar days
Lung biopsy	≥ 90% reported in 14 calendar days
Template Prostate	≥ 90% reported in 21 calendar days
Breast resections	≥ 90% in 21 calendar days
GI resections	≥ 90% in 21 calendar days
Cervical resections	≥ 90% in 21 calendar days
Urology resections	≥ 90% in 21 calendar days
SCC	≥ 90% in 21 calendar days
Melanoma	≥ 90% in 21 calendar days

If a report is required for a specific time (e.g. patient is on a cancer pathway, 2 week wait, MDT meeting or outpatients' appointment), please indicate this clearly on the request form and, where capacity allows, all effort will be made to ensure result is available.