

Portsmouth Cancer Centre PET- CT, FOI response

A. How many patients under the two-week rule waited more than two weeks for their PET/CT scans at the Portsmouth Cancer Centre in the last 12 months?

98% of patients at received their scan within two weeks.

How many PET-CT scans have been delayed and /or cancelled at this PET centre in the last year?

17% of scans at this site were rescheduled or cancelled. Where scans are rescheduled, 60% of the time they are rebooked and completed within the next three days.

What is the reason given for these scans and delays?

There are a wide variety of reasons for this. It's important to note that this may be driven by a patient's own decision or the advice of a clinician to delay the scan until further tests are run. The most frequent reasons which were cited for a delay or cancellation include:

- Patient choice to delay or change appointment
- Clinician choice to delay- e.g. to carry our another test before the PET- CT scan
- Radio Isotope production/ quality assurance failure- on the day production of a fragile radioactive isotope can fail in its manufacturing and/ or quality assurance processes
- Transport delays- for either the patient not able to attend the appointment or the isotope not able to be delivered within the required half-life time from the manufacturing site.

A. Background information – about PET-CT scanning

- PET-CT scans are very complex, and highly tailored to the individual patient – with certain patients, and certain scans requiring a particular 'tracer'. These tracers are harmless, mildly radioactive chemicals which allow these scans to work so effectively.
- As they are radioactive, these tracers are subject to a 'half-life' which means they naturally deteriorate in a matter of hours before they are no longer usable. The tracers are produced on the day of the scan at our sites across the UK. They are then transported to scanning units.
- For patient safety, distributed batches are locked until scanning unit managers are provided an unlock code by the quality control team, essentially approving that batch for use. The batch must be tested while already in transit, as otherwise it may not last long enough to be usable.
- If a batch fails the quality control test it cannot be safely used, and we must therefore reschedule any appointments that day which would have required a tracer from that failed batch. This is entirely to ensure patient safety, and as stated we would endeavour to reschedule any appointments within three days.