

Belfast Health and Social Care Trust Pathway Development Project (PDP)

This project was done in collaboration between MSD and Belfast Health and Social Care Trust

March - December 2022

WHAT IS A PDP?

The Pathway Development Programme (PDP) is a collaborative working agreement between MSD and the NHS designed to support healthcare providers to optimise cancer pathways, enabling patients to be diagnosed and treated faster.



Belfast population = **340,000**

Lung patients impacted per year = **323**

Objectives



To optimise the lung cancer pathway across the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust. This was done through service redesign with the lung cancer MDT by focussing on the pathway from red flag referral through to first definitive treatment. Specifically, contributing towards achievement of the lung 31-day treatment target and 62-day referral to treatment Cancer Waiting Time targets (CWT)

Challenges



Lung cancer diagnostic pathways can be complicated and adherence to the 62-day pathway is challenging. Faster treatment and diagnosis improves outcomes, reducing the risk of performance status decline and potentially enabling patients to have access to a broader range of treatment options.

Solution



Through implementation of MSD's Pathway Development Programme with the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust team, MSD provided project management support to assess the current state of the lung cancer pathway and provide a gap analysis contrasting the pathway with the National Optimal Lung Cancer Pathway.

MSD then supported the implementation of improvement initiatives to close these gaps and assisted with the measurement of their impact.

Impact



- Patients benefited from a faster diagnostic pathway decreasing time to treatment with fewer pathway times breaching the standard

Molecular pathology

1

- Implemented Next Generation Sequencing (NGS) with reflex molecular testing for lung cancer patients in Northern Ireland (approx. 1355/year) which reduced the need to send samples to reference centres. and cut down the sample turnaround time by a **minimum of 4 weeks**.
- NGS currently completes **91% of tests within 10-14 days**.

Histopathology

2

- A fast-track histopathology pathway was implemented to expedite patient samples within 24 hours of the multidisciplinary meeting (MDM), reducing deferrals and optimizing the pathway **by 8 days** benefitting approximately **190 patients annually**.
- New transfer pathway between histopathology and molecular pathology optimising the pathway by **3 days** per sample.

Radiology

3

- Optimised pathway reducing the time to fine needle biopsy from **8 weeks to 4 weeks** benefiting approx. **120 patients annually**.
- Establishment of a CT rapid access pilot which is assessing the impact of fast-tracking definite lung cancer patients (confirmed by Chest X-Ray) to a CT scan within **5 days vs current 14 days**.