



**Midlands Regional Hospital
Tullamore**
Arden Road,
Tullamore, Co. Offaly,
R35 NY51



16/09/2024

Deputy Robert Troy
Dáil Éireann
Leinster House
Dublin 2

RE: PQ ref 33783/24

Subject: To ask the Minister for Health his views on the waiting times for postmortems in Westmeath I understand there is only one person in the region responsible for same.

Dear Deputy Troy,

In response to your above query, Midlands Regional Hospital Tullamore (MRHT) assume the reference to Waiting Times, refers to the time associated with issuing the Post Mortem Examination report as opposed to the wait time for carrying out the Post Mortem Examination which is usually just a matter of days.

Midlands Post Mortem Services

The Midlands Regional Histopathology Department is based at the Midlands Regional Hospital Tullamore (MRHT). The department provides histopathology, cytopathology, specialised referral and autopsy diagnostics to the three Midlands Hospitals at Tullamore (MRHT), Portlaoise (MRHP) and Mullingar (RHM). The department also provides services to GPs and the Coroners Service.

The majority of work associated with the service relates to non Post Mortem Examination (PME) diagnostic activity for the Acute Hospital setting.

Currently Five Consultants Histopathologists in conjunction with the Regional Histopathology Laboratory participate in the delivery of the service. As outlined in the introduction, participation in Coroner PMEs is not mandatory for Consultant Histopathologists and currently 4 of the 5 Pathologists support PMEs. The number of Consultant Histoapthologists participating in the service is variable and we have fluctuated between 3 - 4 over the past number of years.

- PMEs for the Laois Coroner Service are carried out at Mortuary facilities at MRHP. One Consultant Histopathologist carries out PMEs at the MRHP Mortuary.
- PMEs for the Longford, Offaly and Westmeath Coroners Service are carried out Mortuary facilities based at MRHT. Three Consultant Histopathologists carry out PMEs at the MRHT Mortuary.

PME Laboratory diagnostics for both Mortuaries are processed at the Regional Histopathology Department at MRHT. The current staffing complement assigned directly with the department is 14 (13.0 WTE). Additional Clerical, Support and Administrative staff also support this.



There is no established timeframe by which a PME report must be received by a Coroner; the current typical waiting time nationally was on average between 4 and 6 months. However due to increased PME service demand, reduced Consultant _____

Histopathologist/Hospital PME participation and a competing escalation of hospital associated diagnostics this waiting time has increased.

The waiting times from 2022 to 2024 for PME Reports for the Longford/Offaly and Westmeath Coroners Services are outlined below. For the purposes of this exercise, the Turnaround time (TAT) is the time between PME and PME report issue. It is calculated based on the PME reports authorised in each year.

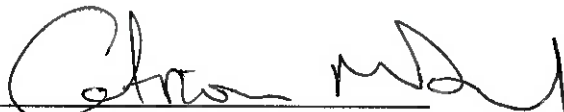
Year	No Of PME Reports Authorised	Median TAT in Days
2024 to date	206 to date	280
2023	198	245
2022	184	223

Please note the increased waiting time for PME report issue over the last number of years is primarily down to a number of contributing factors

- Increased number of PMEs to be reported on
- Increased diagnostic activity for the Hospitals in the Midlands region, which is managed by the same Regional Histopathology Service that caters for the regions PME requirements.
- Increased TAT for Sate Lab referrals. The majority of PMEs from the community require toxicology testing. The National State Laboratory carries out this testing. Last year the TAT for this service increased to 160 days and can be longer for complex cases.

Trusting this clarifies your request.

If I can provide any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.
Trusting this clarifies your request.



Catriona McDonald
General Manager