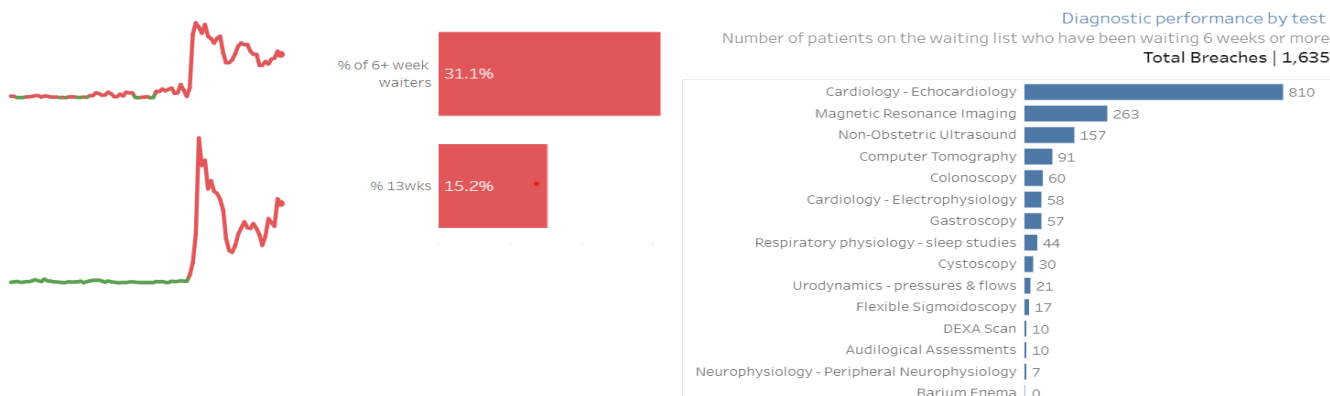


Current performance updates and challenges

The NHS Constitutional Standard for Diagnostic Waiting Times is less than 1% of patients should be waiting in excess of 6 weeks for their test. Pre-COVID (2019-20) Salford locality performance against this target was a challenge and typically breaches ranged between 5% - 7% per month. Plans were put in place at this time to address the issues and by February 2020 performance had improved to 1.7%

From March 2020 waiting times for diagnostic tests increased significantly as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. At their peak in August 2020, 6-week diagnostic waiting time breaches were 52.0%. Waiting time breaches have gradually reduced from 52.0% in August 2020 to 31.1% in September 2022.

The charts below show diagnostic breach trends and September diagnostic performance by test.



In September 2022, of the 5,265 patients on the waiting for a diagnostic test, 1,635 (31.1%) breached the 6 week standard and 801 (15.2%) patients were waiting over 13 weeks.

Two diagnostic tests, Echocardiography and Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) are currently presenting challenges:

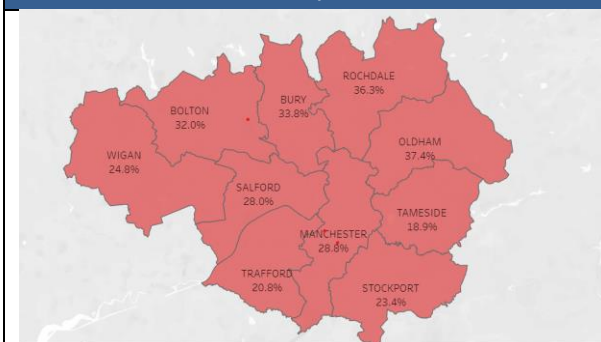
Echocardiology

- The majority of Echocardiology waiting time breaches are at NCA
- NCA reported 31 Echo breaches in February 2022, this increased to 920 in August but has reduced to 729 in September
- This position has been caused by NCA not including Open Access Echo's (OAEs) in diagnostic return reports from March 2022
- The former CCG raised this with NCA colleagues who subsequently found that the registration and booking of this diagnostic test required a detailed piece of work to understand and rectify the error
- The situation worsened over the period March to August 2022, but this investigative work has now been completed by the NCA and a detailed action/recovery plan is in place – see section below for more details

MRI

- MRI waiting lists increased 78% compared to pre-pandemic averages and although this has now stabilised it has resulted in increased waiting times for this diagnostic imaging test
- Northern Care Alliance (NCA) MRI waiting times have improved in the last 3 months and the department continues to engage with Independent Sector (IS) providers to deliver additional imaging capacity to mitigate for the increase in demand and ongoing staff sickness absence which is contributing to delays
- The majority of Salford Locality MRI breaches are at Manchester Foundation Trust (MFT)

How Salford fares in comparison to other GM Localities or national picture



Diagnostic test waiting time performance remains a challenge locally, at GM level and nationally.

Year to date (April to **August** 2022) performance for Salford Locality is 28%

The map shows year to date diagnostic waiting time performance for all 10 GM Localities, which range from 19% - 37% with a GM average of 28%.

NCA Echocardiography Improvement Actions

- Additional 320 slots per month from October by increasing capacity and workforce
- Full capacity and demand review for all ECHO referrals to be undertaken
- One aspect of demand pressure is increased in-patient and urgent pre-op echo requests
- Open Access Echo Audit taking place to be completed by October to allow a change in the referral criteria for requesting ECHO's
- Long Term plan is to have 2 all day lists at the Community Diagnostic Hub at West One due to open March 2023, this will provide an additional 100 slots per week
- Aspiration to provide One Stop community clinics in all diagnostic hubs, bid submitted for 4 additional ECHO machines from the National Team to support this
- Support Manager continues to work with NCA central booking team to ensure patients are being booked in line with protocol and chronological order

General Diagnostics Update/Actions

Overall Diagnostics performance shows an improving position however significant challenges remain, and actions being undertaken at the NCA to address performance issues include:

- Working to increase diagnostic activity to a minimum of 120% of pre-pandemic levels during 2022/23; not yet achieving this level of activity but development of a Tier 1 Community Diagnostic Centre (see final bullet below) will support this
- Ongoing work and focus on reducing imaging backlogs and patients waiting the longest for diagnostic tests
- NCA radiology department continues to prioritise inpatient, cancer and planned surveillance imaging lists whilst at the same time continues to reduce backlogs of routine outpatient activity
- Staffing pressures continue in all modalities due to staff sickness absence
- Independent Sector CT support continues
- Increased endoscopy capacity is being provided through GM modular unit and the IS
- The Locality continues to work with the NCA on the development of a Tier 1 Community Diagnostic Centre (CDC) in Salford. NCA are leading on the business case for this, hoping to draw down national CDC monies through the early adopter scheme. The Locality is engaged in this process and mobilisation of an approved CDC for Salford is on track for later in the 22/23 financial year.