

Classification: Official



# Diagnostic Imaging Dataset Statistical Release

Version 1, 18<sup>th</sup> April 2024

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## 1 Introduction

The Diagnostic Imaging Dataset (DID) is a monthly data collection covering data on diagnostic imaging tests on NHS patients in England. It includes estimates of GP usage of direct access to key diagnostics tests for cancer, for example chest imaging, non-obstetric ultrasound, and brain MRI.

The DID was introduced to monitor progress on *Improving Outcomes: A Strategy for Cancer*<sup>1</sup>. This strategy set out how the Government, NHS and public can help prevent cancer, improve the quality and efficiency of cancer services and move towards achieving outcomes that rival the best. One aspect of that is to ensure that GPs have access to the right diagnostic tests to help them to diagnose or exclude cancer earlier. The DID therefore reports on imaging activity, referral source and timeliness.

These data are collated from Radiology Information Systems (RISs), which are hospital administrative systems used to manage the workflow of radiology departments, and uploaded into a database maintained by NHS Digital.

### 1.1 Frequently Used Acronyms

- **DID**  
Diagnostic Imaging Dataset
- **RIS**  
Radiology Information System

*In this publication, imaging activity for the latest month of data is based on submissions up to the 28th of the month before the publication.*

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<sup>1</sup> [Improving Outcomes: A Strategy for Cancer](#), first published 12 January 2011.

In May 2016, the cancer strategy implementation plan was updated: [Achieving World-Class Cancer Outcomes: Taking the strategy forward](#).

## 2 **Headline Messages**

- There were 46.2 million imaging tests reported in England in the 12 months from January 2023 to December 2023. Of these, 3.43 million imaging tests were reported to have taken place in December 2023.
- In December 2023, Plain Radiography (X-ray) was most common (1.63 million), followed by Diagnostic Ultrasonography (Ultrasound, 0.78 million), Computerized Axial Tomography (CT Scan, 0.59 million) and Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI, 0.33 million).
- The median period between the request being made and the test being performed in December 2023 varied greatly for the different tests, from the same day for X-ray, Fluoroscopy and Medical Photography to 21 days for MRI.
- The median period for the report to be issued after the test in December 2023 ranged from the same day for Ultrasound, for example, to 4 days for MRI.
- In December 2023, GPs requested 26.0% of all tests that may have been used to diagnose or discount cancer<sup>2</sup>, under direct access arrangements. Of these, the test most commonly requested by GPs was Chest X-ray (167,000), whilst the test with the highest proportion of GP referral was ultrasounds that may have been used to diagnose ovarian cancer (49% of which were requested by GPs).

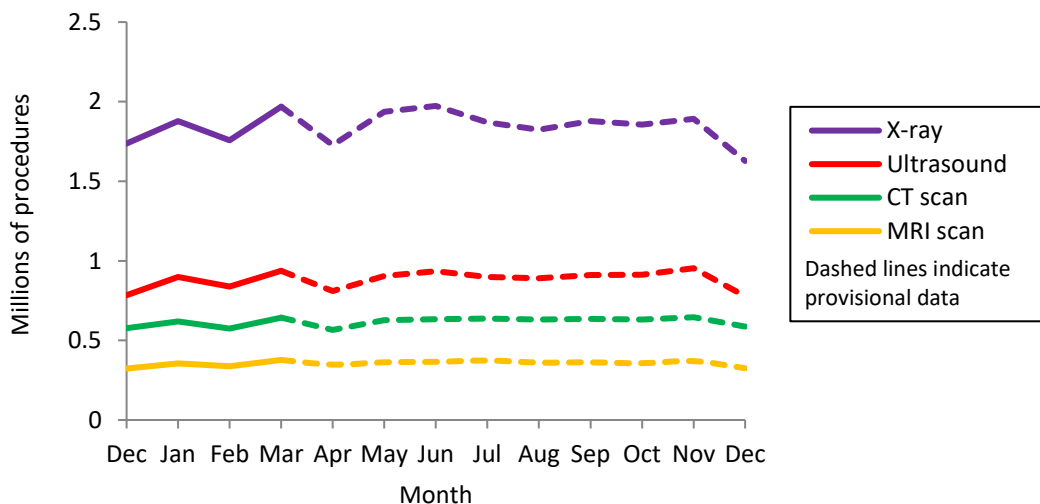
<sup>2</sup> Although these tests are used to diagnose cancer, many of the tests also have wider clinical uses. Within this data it is not possible to distinguish between the different uses of these tests

### 3 Current Data – December 2022 to December 2023

#### 3.1 Imaging Activity

- 3.1.1. There were 46.2 million imaging tests reported in England during the year from January 2023 to December 2023. Of these, 3.43 million imaging tests were reported to have taken place in December 2023.
- 3.1.2. Out of all tests performed in December 2023, X-rays (Plain Radiography) were the most common, with 1.63 million X-rays being performed. The next most common procedures were Diagnostic Ultrasonography (Ultrasound, 0.78 million), Computerized Axial Tomography (CT Scan, 0.59 million) and Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI, 0.33 million).
- 3.1.3. Table 1 gives an all-England count of imaging activity by modality from December 2022 to December 2023. December 2022 is shown at the top of the table for comparison but is not included in the totals for the latest 12 months. Overall activity for all modalities decreased by 3.1% between December 2022 and December 2023.
- 3.1.4. Graph 1 shows the trend in imaging activity from December 2022 to December 2023.

**Graph 1: NHS imaging activity in England, December 2022 to December 2023**



All data from April 2023 onwards remain provisional and subject to change. Further information on the tests included in these tables is given in the glossary section. Full break-downs by modality, provider and referral source setting are given in Tables 1 – 6 (separate excel files), available from [NHS England DID website](#).

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**Table 1: Count of imaging activity in England, on NHS Patients, December 2022 to December 2023**

	X-ray	Ultrasound	CT Scan	MRI	Fluoroscopy	Nuclear Medicine	PET-CT Scans	SPECT Scans	Medical Photography	% organisations included	Total
<b>Dec</b>	1,737,045	783,975	576,195	323,195	67,710	24,725	19,565	4,150	4,645	98.8%	<b>3,541,205</b>
<b>Jan</b>	1,876,975	899,000	619,850	355,300	76,215	28,800	21,755	4,390	5,270	98.2%	<b>3,887,555</b>
<b>Feb</b>	1,758,050	837,875	574,600	338,325	70,375	26,685	21,565	4,150	5,130	97.5%	<b>3,636,750</b>
<b>Mar</b>	1,968,635	937,490	642,870	377,325	78,950	28,960	23,400	4,910	5,730	98.1%	<b>4,068,275</b>
<b>Apr</b>	1,726,935	809,830	566,055	348,175	65,330	23,875	20,110	3,150	4,620	98.7%	<b>3,568,080</b>
<b>May</b>	1,936,205	904,670	626,980	362,600	77,305	26,735	23,160	3,995	5,395	96.8%	<b>3,967,040</b>
<b>Jun</b>	1,973,215	934,310	633,580	365,395	81,570	28,355	24,395	4,425	5,900	97.4%	<b>4,051,140</b>
<b>Jul</b>	1,870,895	899,195	637,505	373,630	72,685	27,100	22,010	3,960	5,510	98.7%	<b>3,912,490</b>
<b>Aug</b>	1,823,640	891,000	630,640	360,915	75,790	26,585	22,820	3,760	5,425	98.1%	<b>3,840,570</b>
<b>Sep</b>	1,878,105	910,300	634,960	362,105	76,315	26,350	22,870	3,775	5,655	99.4%	<b>3,798,045</b>
<b>Oct</b>	1,855,715	912,145	631,460	356,770	74,355	26,260	22,320	3,725	5,940	95.5%	<b>3,845,645</b>
<b>Nov</b>	1,892,060	953,620	645,540	369,720	81,650	27,620	23,455	3,865	6,475	96.8%	<b>3,793,545</b>
<b>Dec</b>	1,627,480	777,480	587,290	325,265	63,980	22,020	19,590	3,275	4,545	93.0%	<b>3,430,920</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>22,187,905</b>	<b>10,666,920</b>	<b>7,431,335</b>	<b>4,295,525</b>	<b>894,510</b>	<b>319,345</b>	<b>267,450</b>	<b>47,385</b>	<b>65,595</b>	-	<b>46,175,970</b>

1. Activity not matched to a known organisation is omitted.
2. Data from April 2023 onwards remain provisional and subject to change.
3. Total row represents a rolling 12-month total and does not include activity from the earliest month in the table. Totals may not always equal the sum of the parts due to rounding

### 3.2 Patient Test Times

- 3.2.1. The DID collects data on four dates associated with each imaging event:
- Date of test request (request made by health care professional)
  - Date of test request received (by the organisation providing the imaging)
  - Date of test
  - Date of test report issued (by health care professional interpreting the imaging output)
- 3.2.2. The Date of Test determines the month an imaging event is reported under in the DID monthly publications.
- 3.2.3. There is variation in the median period between the request being made (or received) and the test being performed for each of the different tests in December 2023. The median period was as low as the same day for X-ray, Fluoroscopy and Medical Photography and as high as 21 days for MRI scans.
- 3.2.4. Table 2 gives the median number of days between the ‘date of test request’ (or, where this was missing, the ‘date of test request received’) and the ‘date of test’, split by the test modality for each month from December 2022 to December 2023.

**Table 2: Median number of days between ‘date of test request’ and ‘date of test’ for imaging activity, December 2022 to December 2023**

	X-ray	Ultra-sound	CT Scans	MRI	Fluoro-scropy	Nuclear Medicine	PET-CT Scans	SPECT Scans	Medical Photography
<b>Dec</b>	0	14	1	21	0	22	9	20	0
<b>Jan</b>	0	15	1	25	0	28	11	25	0
<b>Feb</b>	0	14	1	20	0	22	10	20	0
<b>Mar</b>	0	14	1	20	0	22	9	20	0
<b>Apr</b>	0	16	1	21	0	23	10	25	0
<b>May</b>	0	15	1	19	0	22	9	21	0
<b>Jun</b>	0	14	1	19	0	22	8	22	0
<b>Jul</b>	0	14	1	19	0	21	8	20	0
<b>Aug</b>	0	15	1	19	0	21	8	21	0
<b>Sep</b>	0	15	1	19	0	22	8	21	0
<b>Oct</b>	0	15	1	18	0	21	8	20	0
<b>Nov</b>	0	15	1	20	0	21	8	18	0
<b>Dec</b>	0	15	1	21	0	20	10	18	0

Note: Median values of 0 occur where at least 50% of activity has the same day for both 'date of test request' and 'date of test'. Where 'Date of test request' was missing, 'Date of test request received' was used instead. Records where both dates were missing were excluded from the median calculation.

- 3.2.5. These figures should not be compared to “waiting time” statistics that measure how long patients are on a waiting list, since the DID figures include both planned and unplanned imaging activity. In addition, they exclude any cancelled or missed appointments and they count the period for each distinct test not each patient appointment.

3.2.6. There was slight variation between different test types in the median period for the report to be issued after the test. In December 2023 this ranged from the same day for Ultrasound, for example, to 4 days for MRI. Table 3.1 gives the median number of days between ‘date of test’ and ‘date of test report issued’, split by the test modality for each month December 2022 to December 2023. Table 3.2 gives the percentage of records where the test report is issued on the same day of test, split by modality.

**Table 3.1: Median number of days between ‘date of test’ and ‘date of test report issued’ for imaging activity, by modality, December 2022 to December 2023**

	X-ray	Ultra-sound	CT Scans	MRI	Fluoro-scropy	Nuclear Medicine	PET-CT Scans	SPECT Scans	Medical Photography
Dec	1	0	0	4	0	1	2	1	0
Jan	1	0	0	3	0	1	2	1	0
Feb	1	0	0	3	0	1	2	2	0
Mar	1	0	0	4	0	1	2	2	0
Apr	1	0	0	4	0	1	2	2	0
May	1	0	0	3	0	1	2	2	0
Jun	1	0	0	3	0	1	3	2	0
Jul	1	0	0	4	0	1	3	2	0
Aug	1	0	0	4	0	1	3	2	1
Sep	1	0	0	4	0	1	2	2	2
Oct	1	0	0	3	0	1	2	1	1
Nov	1	0	0	3	0	1	2	1	1
Dec	1	0	0	4	0	1	2	2	1

Note: Median values of 0 occur where at least 50% of activity has the same day for both ‘date of test’ and ‘date of test report issued’. Records where either of these dates is missing are excluded from the calculation of median values. 96.5% of all records for tests performed in December 2023 included both these dates.

**Table 3.2: Percentage of records where date of test report issued equals date of test, by modality, December 2022 to December 2023**

	X-ray	Ultra-sound	CT Scans	MRI	Fluoro-scropy	Nuclear Medicine	PET-CT Scans	SPECT Scans	Medical Photography
Dec	34%	94%	60%	23%	75%	37%	14%	33%	57%
Jan	36%	94%	59%	23%	74%	37%	14%	33%	55%
Feb	35%	94%	58%	23%	74%	35%	13%	31%	58%
Mar	35%	94%	58%	23%	74%	35%	13%	32%	56%
Apr	34%	94%	58%	22%	75%	36%	13%	33%	57%
May	34%	94%	60%	23%	74%	36%	12%	32%	59%
Jun	35%	94%	59%	24%	75%	37%	12%	30%	61%
Jul	34%	94%	60%	24%	75%	35%	12%	29%	52%
Aug	35%	95%	60%	24%	76%	35%	11%	29%	49%
Sep	35%	94%	60%	24%	76%	35%	11%	31%	42%
Oct	35%	94%	60%	24%	75%	35%	14%	35%	44%
Nov	37%	94%	59%	23%	75%	35%	16%	31%	49%
Dec	36%	94%	61%	23%	76%	36%	14%	31%	43%



### 3.3 Imaging Tests that could contribute to Early Diagnosis of Cancer

3.3.1. A main driver for the creation of the DID is to assess use of diagnostic imaging that could contribute to the early diagnosis of cancer and in particular General Practitioner (GP) direct access to these tests. To enable this analysis a subset of procedures particularly used to identify or discount a diagnosis of cancer have been identified:

- **Brain (MRI)**

This may diagnose brain cancer, this includes – MRI of brain (often with contrast);

- **Kidney or bladder (Ultrasound)**

This may diagnose kidney or bladder cancer, this includes – ultrasound of kidney, ultrasound scan of bladder or ultrasound and Doppler scan of kidney;

- **Chest and/or abdomen (CT)**

These may diagnose lung cancer, this includes - chest + abdominal CT, CT of chest (high resolution or other), CT thorax + abdomen with contrast, CT thorax with contrast or CT chest + abdomen;

- **Chest (X-ray)**

This may diagnose lung cancer, this includes – plain chest X-ray only;

- **Abdomen and/or pelvis (Ultrasound)**

This may diagnose ovarian cancer, this includes – ultrasonography of pelvis, ultrasonography of abdomen (upper, lower or other) or abdomen + pelvis.

3.3.2. Although these tests are used to diagnose cancer, many of them also have wider clinical uses. Within this data, it is not possible to distinguish between the different uses of these tests.

3.3.3. Brain MRI, Chest X-ray, and Ultrasounds of the abdomen and pelvis to diagnose ovarian cancer are three of the key tests which are outlined in *Improving Outcomes: a Strategy for Cancer*.

3.3.4. In December 2023, GPs requested 26.0% of all tests that may have been used to diagnose or discount cancer, under direct access arrangements. Of these, the test most commonly requested by GPs was Chest X-ray (167,000), whilst the test with the highest proportion of GP referral was ultrasounds that may have been used to diagnose ovarian cancer (49% of which were requested by GPs).

3.3.5. Table 4 gives a count of tests carried out on NHS patients that may have been used to make an early diagnosis of cancer. It includes the total number of these tests carried out, regardless of referral source setting, and a subset of this total where the referral source was recorded as “GP Direct Access”.

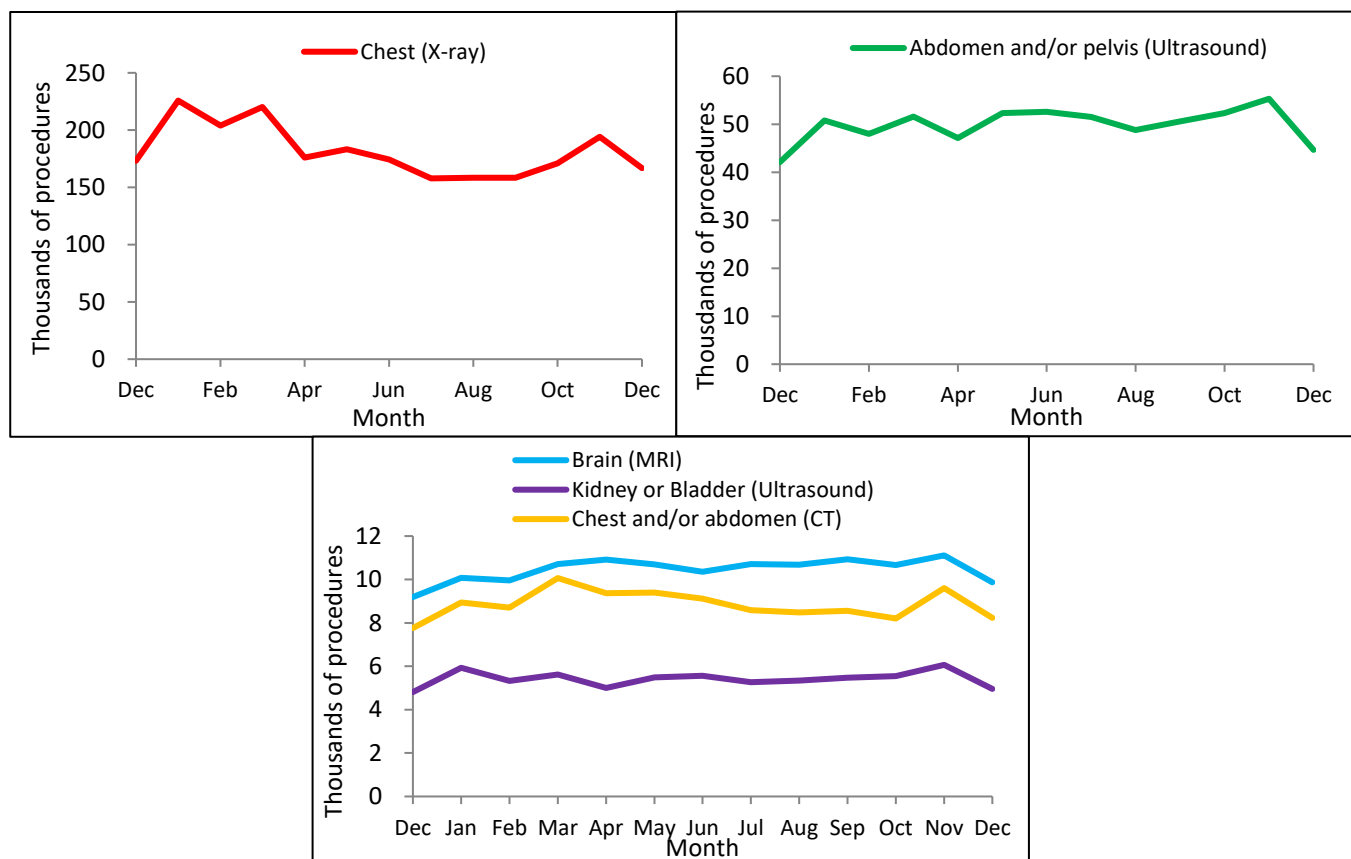
**Table 4: Imaging activity for groups of tests suitable for diagnosing cancer, for all patients referred and for those directly referred by a GP, December 2022 to December 2023**

	Brain (MRI)		Kidney or Bladder (Ultrasound)		Chest and/or abdomen (CT)		Chest (X-ray)		Abdomen and/or pelvis (Ultrasound)	
	All	GP	All	GP	All	GP	All	GP	All	GP
Dec	70,035	9,190	16,540	4,810	59,135	7,760	743,275	173,200	90,540	42,105
Jan	78,105	10,080	19,270	5,935	66,750	8,940	759,335	225,770	107,335	50,795
Feb	73,520	9,950	17,760	5,325	63,345	8,710	675,120	203,875	101,250	48,000
Mar	82,500	10,715	18,870	5,620	72,050	10,065	748,230	220,170	109,600	51,610
Apr	76,365	10,910	16,750	5,005	63,755	9,365	644,570	176,100	97,765	47,090
May	79,490	10,690	18,455	5,495	66,830	9,400	664,530	183,195	105,965	52,310
Jun	78,790	10,355	18,905	5,560	68,115	9,110	640,380	174,390	107,880	52,610
Jul	80,230	10,710	17,295	5,265	66,905	8,585	628,725	157,840	105,020	51,525
Aug	78,510	10,675	17,905	5,345	64,575	8,475	619,505	158,510	100,685	48,790
Sep	78,850	10,935	17,915	5,480	65,005	8,555	629,290	158,285	104,305	50,600
Oct	75,895	10,660	17,520	5,540	63,960	8,195	656,505	170,900	105,545	52,340
Nov	79,120	11,110	18,740	6,065	67,400	9,605	695,130	194,230	110,425	55,305
Dec	69,770	9,870	15,995	4,950	60,155	8,235	662,170	166,715	91,800	44,640

Note: Data from April 2023 onwards have been updated but remain provisional and subject to change.

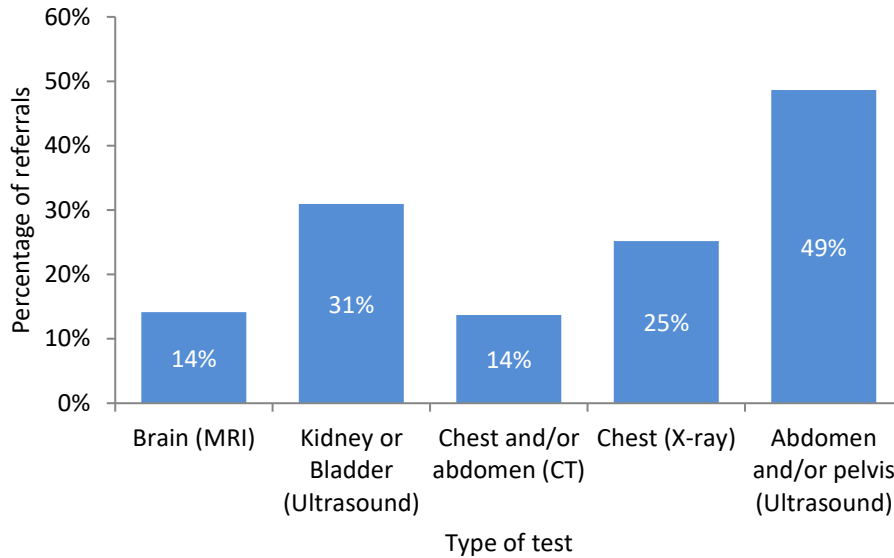
3.3.6. The number of Chest X-rays (all referrals and GP referrals) appeared to show some seasonality with summer months generally having lower numbers of Chest X-rays and winter months higher levels. This was not evident in the other tests. The trend in imaging activity for patients directly referred by a GP for December 2022 to December 2023 is shown in Graph 2.

**Graph 2: Imaging activity for patients directly referred by a GP, December 2022 to December 2023**



3.3.7. Graph 3 shows the proportion of referrals that were made by GPs for tests undertaken in December 2023. Ultrasounds on the Abdomen and/or Pelvis had the highest proportion (49%) of referrals made by GPs, whilst Chest and/or abdomen CT had the lowest (14%).

**Graph 3: Percentage of referrals made by GPs by type of test, December 2023**



3.3.8. Table 5 shows the median number of days between the date a test was requested and the date the test was completed, for groups of tests suitable for diagnosing cancer, for All Referral routes and GP Direct Access for December 2022 to December 2023.

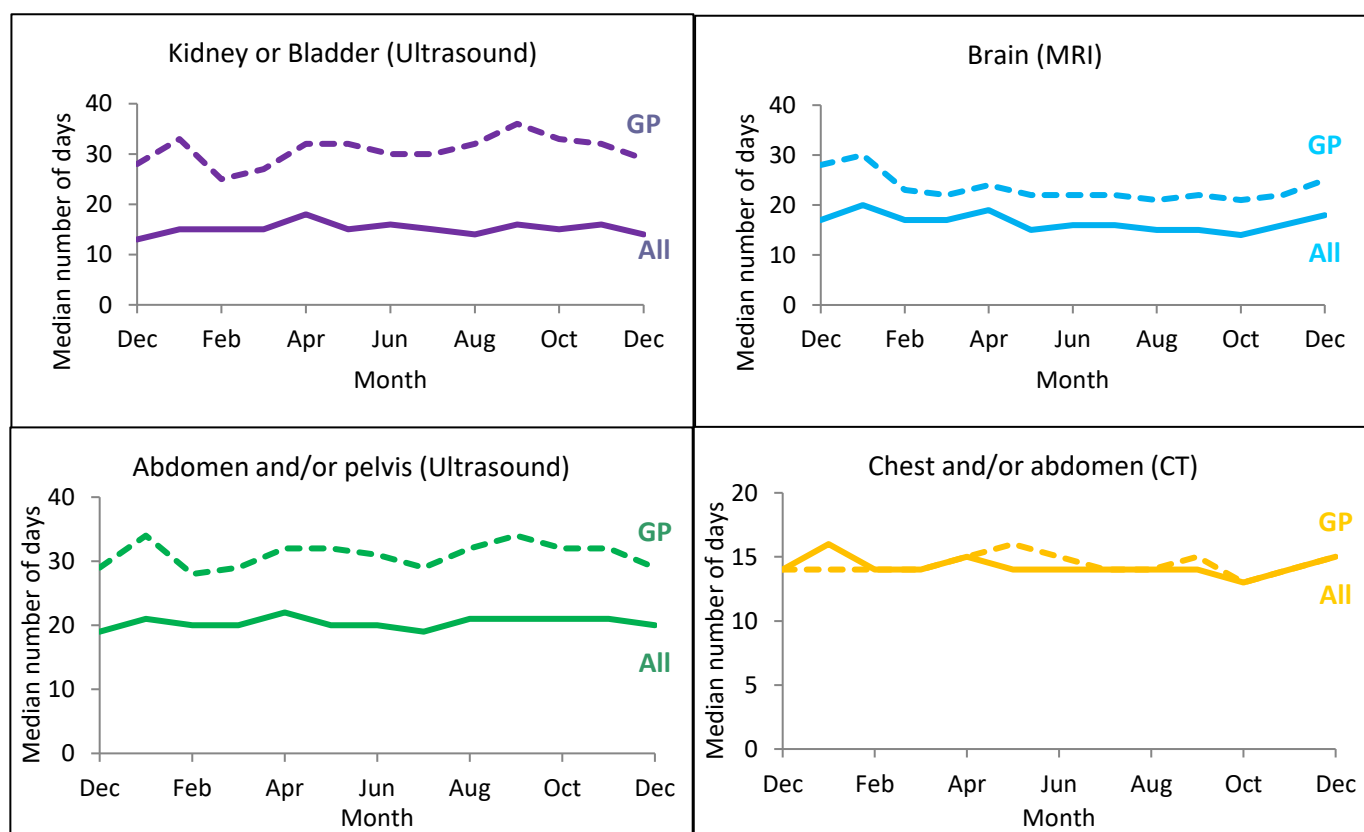
3.3.9. The median period from a test being requested (or, where this was missing, the date of test request being received) to being performed is noticeably longer for GP direct access than overall for the Ultrasound tests (Kidney or bladder and Abdomen and/or pelvis) used to diagnose or discount cancer. There are smaller differences for Brain MRI and Chest and/or abdomen CT in December 2023. The main reason for a difference is that 'All Referrals' includes tests on emergency admissions and inpatients, which have shorter waits. The trend in these differences is shown in Graph 4.

**Table 5: Median number of days between ‘date of test request’ and ‘date of test’ for groups of tests suitable for diagnosing cancer, overall and for GP Direct Access, December 2022 to December 2023**

	Brain (MRI)		Kidney or Bladder (Ultrasound)		Chest and/or abdomen (CT)		Chest (X-ray)		Abdomen and/or pelvis (Ultrasound)	
	All	GP	All	GP	All	GP	All	GP	All	GP
Dec	17	28	13	28	14	14	0	3	19	29
Jan	20	30	15	33	16	14	0	3	21	34
Feb	17	23	15	25	14	14	0	4	20	28
Mar	17	22	15	27	14	14	0	4	20	29
Apr	19	24	18	32	15	15	0	4	22	32
May	15	22	15	32	14	16	0	4	20	32
Jun	16	22	16	30	14	15	0	4	20	31
Jul	16	22	15	30	14	14	0	4	19	29
Aug	15	21	14	32	14	14	0	4	21	32
Sep	15	22	16	36	14	15	0	3	21	34
Oct	14	21	15	33	13	13	0	3	21	32
Nov	16	22	16	32	14	14	0	3	21	32
Dec	18	25	14	29	15	15	0	3	20	29

Note: Median values of 0 occur where at least 50% of activity has the same day for both 'date of test request' and 'date of test'. Where 'Date of test request' was missing, 'Date of test request received' was used instead. Records where both dates were missing were excluded from the median calculation.

**Graph 4: Median number of days between ‘date of test request’ and ‘date of test’ for groups of tests suitable for diagnosing cancer, overall and for GP Direct Access, December 2022 to December 2023**



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3.3.10. As can be seen from Table 6, although there is generally little difference in the time taken for a test report to be issued for GP Direct Access and All Referrals, GP-referred reporting periods were slightly longer for Brain MRI and Chest and/or abdomen (CT).

**Table 6: Median number of days between date of test and date test report issued and Percentage of records where report issued on day of test, for groups of tests suitable for diagnosing cancer, for all referrals and GP Direct Access, December 2022 to December 2023**

	Brain (MRI)				Kidney or Bladder (Ultrasound)			
	All Median	All % Same Day	GP Median	GP % Same Day	All Median	All % Same Day	GP Median	GP % Same Day
Dec	2	35%	4	15%	0	95%	0	93%
Jan	2	33%	4	16%	0	95%	0	92%
Feb	2	34%	4	14%	0	94%	0	91%
Mar	2	34%	4	16%	0	95%	0	92%
Apr	3	32%	4	15%	0	95%	0	95%
May	2	33%	4	16%	0	96%	0	94%
Jun	2	34%	4	16%	0	96%	0	94%
Jul	2	33%	4	14%	0	96%	0	94%
Aug	2	34%	4	16%	0	96%	0	94%
Sep	2	34%	4	15%	0	95%	0	92%
Oct	2	33%	3	15%	0	95%	0	92%
Nov	2	33%	3	15%	0	95%	0	92%
Dec	2	33%	3	17%	0	95%	0	93%

	Chest and/or abdomen (CT)				Chest (X-ray)				Abdomen and/or pelvis (Ultrasound)			
	All Median	All % Same Day	GP Median	GP % Same Day	All Median	All % Same Day	GP Median	GP % Same Day	All Median	All % Same Day	GP Median	GP % Same Day
Dec	4	28%	4	17%	3	24%	2	31%	0	95%	0	93%
Jan	3	28%	3	18%	2	25%	1	32%	0	95%	0	93%
Feb	4	27%	4	16%	2	25%	2	30%	0	95%	0	92%
Mar	4	26%	4	16%	2	25%	2	30%	0	95%	0	93%
Apr	4	27%	5	15%	2	25%	2	30%	0	96%	0	94%
May	4	28%	4	17%	2	24%	2	30%	0	95%	0	93%
Jun	4	28%	4	16%	2	25%	2	30%	0	95%	0	93%
Jul	4	27%	5	16%	2	25%	2	31%	0	95%	0	93%
Aug	5	27%	5	15%	2	25%	2	31%	0	96%	0	94%
Sep	4	26%	5	14%	2	25%	2	32%	0	95%	0	93%
Oct	4	27%	4	17%	2	25%	1	33%	0	95%	0	93%
Nov	4	27%	4	15%	2	26%	1	34%	0	95%	0	93%
Dec	4	28%	5	13%	2	25%	1	34%	0	95%	0	93%

Note: Median values of 0 occur where at least 50% of activity has 'date of test' and 'date of test report issued' recorded as the same day. Only records where both dates are reported are included in the calculation of median values: 96.9% of all records for tests performed in December 2023 and 97.7% of records for patients referred through GP Direct Access.

## 4 Annex

### 4.1 Glossary

#### **Computerised Axial Tomography (CT Scan)**

Computed tomography (CT), sometimes called CAT scan, uses special x-ray equipment to obtain image data from different angles around the body, then uses computer processing of the information to show a cross-section of body tissues and organs. In the DID this means all codes mentioning CAT or computed tomography except those also mentioning PET.

#### **Diagnostic Ultrasonography (Ultrasound)**

The use of ultrasonic waves for diagnostic or therapeutic purposes, specifically to image an internal body structure, monitor a developing foetus or generate localised deep heat to the tissues. In the DID this means any code relating to ultrasound.

#### **Fluoroscopy**

Fluoroscopy is an imaging technique commonly used by physicians to obtain real-time images of the internal structures of a patient through the use of a fluoroscope. In its simplest form, a fluoroscope consists of an x-ray source and fluorescent screen between which a patient is placed. In the DID this is a collection of codes mentioning fluoroscopy or using fluoroscopic guidance, Barium enema or swallow. Interventional procedures are classified under imaging modalities which provide guidance. Almost all interventional procedures are under fluoroscopy procedure. A very small number of interventional procedures are under CT or MRI procedures.

#### **Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI)**

Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) is a method of producing extremely detailed pictures of body tissues and organs without the need for x-rays. The electromagnetic energy that is released when exposing a patient to radio waves in a strong magnetic field is measured and analysed by a computer, which forms two- or three-dimensional images that may be viewed on a TV monitor. In the DID this means all codes mentioning MRI.

#### **Plain Radiography (X-ray)**

A Radiograph is an image produced on a radiosensitive surface, such as a detector, by radiation other than visible light, especially by X-rays passed through an object or by photographing a fluoroscopic image. In the DID this means any code referring to radiography or X-ray.

#### **Medical Photography**

A Photograph is an image recorded on sensitized material by energy from the light spectrum, which is then processed to create a print that can be viewed clearly. Medical Photography is used in order to document a variety of different medical conditions and their treatment.

#### **Nuclear Medicine**

Nuclear medicine (NM) is a branch of medicine and medical imaging that uses unsealed radioactive substances in diagnosis and therapy. These substances consist of radionuclides, or pharmaceuticals that have been labelled with

radionuclides (radiopharmaceuticals). In diagnosis, radioactive substances are administered to patients and the radiation emitted is measured.

Nuclear medicine imaging tests differ from most other imaging modalities in that the tests primarily show the physiological function of the system being investigated, as opposed to the anatomy. It has both diagnostic and therapeutic uses, such as planning cancer treatments and evaluating how well a patient has responded to a treatment. It can be used with other diagnostic methods, including CT scans and MRI, where the images are superimposed to produce complex cross-sectional, three-dimensional scans.

### **Position Emission Tomography – Computer Tomography (PET-CT Scans)**

Position Emission Tomography - Computed Tomography (PET-CT Scan) is an imaging technique used in the diagnosis and treatment of cancer which combines PET with CT. PET uses gamma-type cameras to produce crude three-dimensional images highlighting radionuclide concentration in the body. CT allows precise localisation of the radionuclide concentration. PET-CT scans can be used to show how far a cancer has spread and can determine if a patient is responding positively to a treatment. In the DID this means all codes mentioning PET, whether or not they also mention CT.

### **Single Photon Emission Computerised Tomography (SPECT scans)**

Single Photon Emission Computerised Tomography (SPECT scans) is an imaging method that allows for analysis of internal organs. Gamma photon-emitting radionuclides are administered to a patient prior to being exposed to gamma cameras that rotate around a patient to produce cross-sectional slices that can then be reformatted into a true three-dimensional image of the patient.

### **Median**

The median is the preferred measure of the average time between pairs of dates within records as it is less susceptible to extreme values than the mean. The median number of days between pairs of dates is calculated by ordering the values obtained by subtracting the dates for each record and selecting the middle value when all records are ranked by these number of days.

### **Modality**

The broad procedure or method used for examination, for example MRI. This may include procedures assisted by the method, e.g. biopsy or injection. In the DID the modality of the examination is derived from SNOMED CT (Systematised Nomenclature of Medicine – Clinical Terms) or NICIP (National Interim Clinical Imaging Procedure) codes.

### **Referral source setting**

This is a categorisation of the department or organisation making the referral for the imaging activity. It includes categories for admitted patient care, outpatients, GP Direct Access, A&E and health care providers other than the organisation providing the imaging activity.



## 4.2 Data Quality Statement

This collection uses data from Radiology Information Systems (RISs) as a rich resource for analysis, making wider use of administrative data in line with the code of practice for official statistics. Some RIS systems cover additional test activity not reported in this publication.

A number of validations and other checks are built into the DID upload system and processing to seek to ensure that the data are complete and accurately reflect activity. Nevertheless, data issues may affect activity for some providers and users should exercise care when interpreting the results.

Reported times from test request to test should not be compared to diagnostic test waiting time statistics, as these are collected using different definitions. Unlike these statistics, the DM01 diagnostic test waiting times statistics exclude records where, for example:

- The patient is waiting for a planned (or surveillance) diagnostic test/procedure as part of a treatment plan, which is carried out at a specific time or repeated at a specific frequency for clinical reasons, eg. 6-month check cystoscopy;
- The patient is currently admitted to a hospital bed and is waiting for a diagnostic test/procedure as part of their inpatient treatment.

Data for this publication is extracted from the DID data warehouse around the 28<sup>th</sup> of the third month after the period. Any data submitted after this date may not be included in the provisional published data but should be included in subsequent updates. Finalised data are published in the Annual Report at the end of the year.

Details of coverage, completeness, comparability with other data sources, and a discussion on the types of data quality issues encountered are provided in the Technical Report and the Coverage Completeness Data Quality Summary report which is available on the NHS England Statistics website.



## Contact Us

### 4.2.1 Feedback

We welcome feedback on this publication. Please contact us at [england.did@nhs.net](mailto:england.did@nhs.net).

### 4.2.2 Websites

Further information about the dataset can be found on [NHS Digital DID website](#).

Those who submit data to DID do so via a secure submission portal. Further information about submissions can be found on the [submission website](#).

The DID Additional Tables and Technical Report can be found on [NHS England DID website](#).

### 4.2.3 Additional Information

For press enquiries contact the NHS England Media team on 0113 825 0958 or 0113 825 0959. Email enquiries should be directed to [nhsengland.media@nhs.net](mailto:nhsengland.media@nhs.net)

The next scheduled publication of this report is 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2024.

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