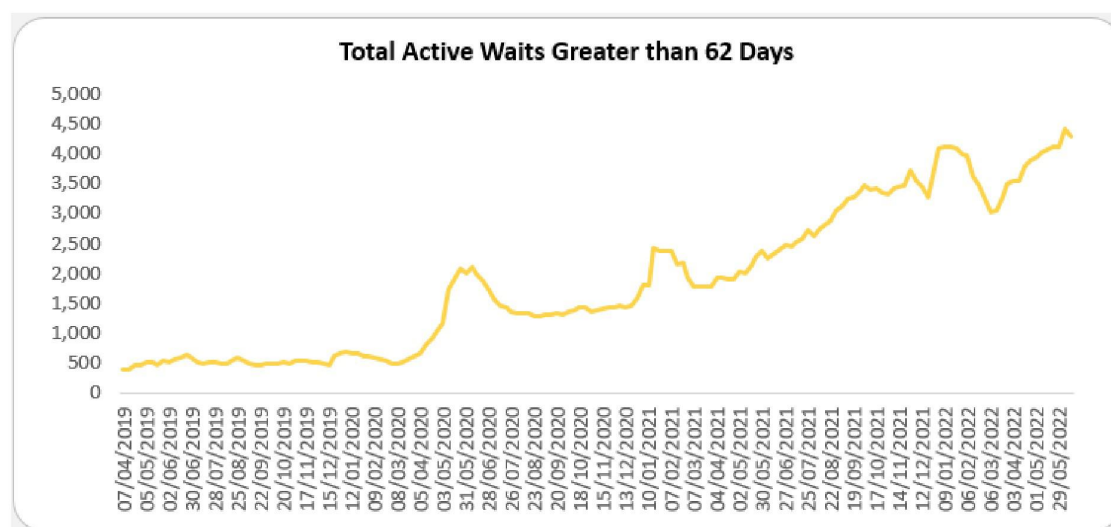


The volume of cancer patients on the NHS Wales waitlist for more than 62 days (known as the “backlog”) has increased by 8.9-fold, from 483 on 1 March 2020 to 4,277 on 12 June 2022 (Figure 12). Compared to 13 June 2021, the waitlist has increased by 1.8-fold from 2,325. The number of patients on the waitlist increased sharply during COVID-19 waves in spring 2020, early 2021 and early 2022. This reflects NHS Wales pressures during periods of high COVID-19 infection and hospitalisation rates. The waitlist volume decreased following each peak, evidencing NHS efforts to reduce the waitlist as COVID-19 pressures decrease. The volume reduced to levels similar to immediately before the peak, with the exception of the spring 2020 wave. During this time, NHS Wales activities were most greatly restricted, with non-urgent activities paused and a period of transition whilst the ability to host appointments via telephone and video was set-up. Since this was necessary largely due to COVID-19 protections put in place requiring people to stay at home during lockdowns, this indicates that lockdown protections negatively impacted and increased waiting times for cancer patients.

Figure 13 shows the waitlist volume by stage. It shows that the greatest increase has been for patients at the diagnostic stage, suggesting that the COVID-19 pandemic has had greatest impact on diagnosis of cancer and length of time for patients to wait for diagnosis and to start treatment, as opposed to having had a large negative impact on patients undergoing cancer treatment.

*Figure 12. Cancer patient waitlist volumes, Wales*



Source: NHS Wales Delivery Unit Cancer Dashboard, 20 June 2022