Aim: This audit evaluated the performance of the local melanoma referral pathway against national cancer wait times, to identify limiting factors and find solutions to deliver service in a safe and streamlined manner.

Method: Patients with malignant melanoma referred to general surgeons between March and June 2022 were identified retrospectively. Patients with other skin cancers, concurrent malignancy, metastatic melanoma, or those declining surgery were excluded. The date of each step of the referral pathway was noted for each patient using Microsoft Excel, and the difference between the dates was calculated. The percentage of compliance with the 31-day and 62-day wait was compared against the national operational standard.

Results: During the audit period, 59 patients with malignant melanoma were referred to the general surgeons, 22 of these were excluded for the aforementioned reasons. Of the remaining 37 patients, 65% were male and the average age was 66 years old. 83% of patients received their first treatment from diagnosis within 31 days, falling short of the 96% target. Only 60% of patients received surgery within the following 31 days. On average it took 56.8 days from diagnosis to surgical treatment, with wait time to operation varying from 15 days to 101 days.

Conclusions: Overall, the average time to surgery for patients with malignant melanoma was less than the target 62 days, however there was notable variation in the number of days patients waited for their operation. Further detailed analysis of cases with long wait times is required to reduce the risk of delaying vital cancer treatment.