Time to Reimbursement in Ireland: A Decade of Results & Possibilities of the FASPM

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01. Introduction

- In Ireland, the National Centre for Pharmacoeconomics (NCPE) evaluates new medicines for reimbursement.
- Evaluations are conducted through Rapid Reviews (RR) and, when necessary, full Health Technology Assessments (HTA).
- Following these assessments, the Health Service Executive (HSE) engages with the applicant company before issuing a final reimbursement decision.
- The Framework Agreement on the Supply and Pricing of Medicines (FASPM) for Ireland (2026 – 2029), published 03 March 2026 commits to a 180-day review of new medicines/uses of existing medicines by Q1 2029, with an interim target of 270-day review by Q4 2027.
- As a trusted partner to the Pharmaceutical industry on reimbursement strategy, support and success, **AXIS has tracked reimbursement timelines for over 10+ years** in a centralised database.
- AXIS completes timeline analysis using the date of RR commission as the starting point, rather than other reported analyses which takes a starting point of marketing authorisation date.
- **Reimbursement delays can significantly impact patient access** to life-changing treatments. By understanding factors that influence time to reimbursement decision (TTRD), valuable insights can be obtained for policymakers, healthcare providers, and pharmaceutical stakeholders.

The findings may support more **transparent, efficient,** & **equitable decision-making processes.**

02. Objectives

This research builds **on over ten years of previous research evaluating the time to reimbursement (TTR) in Ireland** and aims to:

- Analyse trends in reimbursement decisions over a ten-year period, including the volume of submissions processed, categorised according to whether reimbursement was granted following a RR only or a full HTA.
- Assess patterns in Irish TTRDs for new applications over the past decade, identifying key trends in the assessment and reimbursement process and the possibilities for TTR in Ireland, given the new FASPM.

03. Methods

Data for analysis

- NCPE assessments over the past decade (June 2016 – June 2026), and tracking information published by the HSE (for assessments between 2024 – June 2026).
- A sub-analysis was conducted on applications where both the NCPE and HSE published timeline data.
- TTR data were collated in Microsoft Excel® using the NCPE and HSE websites, supplemented by over a decade of internally maintained records.

Analysis plan

- The data collected from various sources were consolidated in Microsoft Excel®.
- The NCPE website publicly discloses only the month and year of reimbursement. Therefore, for applications that predate the HSE tracker, it was assumed that reimbursement approval occurs on the first day of the respective month for the purpose of timeline calculations.

For each appraisal, the following timelines were calculated:

- The time from RR submission to RR outcome.
- The time from HTA submission to HTA outcome
- The time from RR submission to reimbursement decision (i.e., TTRD).

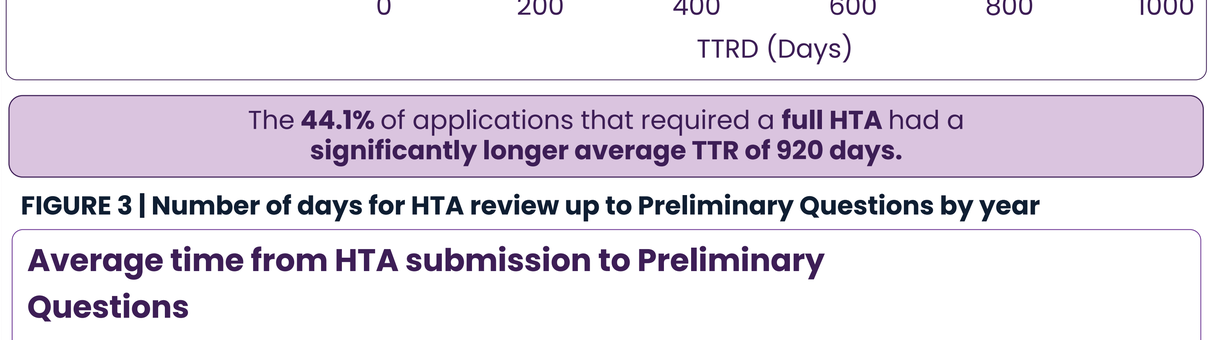
Further analysis was conducted on medicines with HSE tracker information available:

- Time from NCPE appraisal to CPU meeting date.

N=392 applications reimbursed between June 2016 and June 2026 identified for analysis
N=22 applications between 2024 and 2026 were identified for sub-analysis

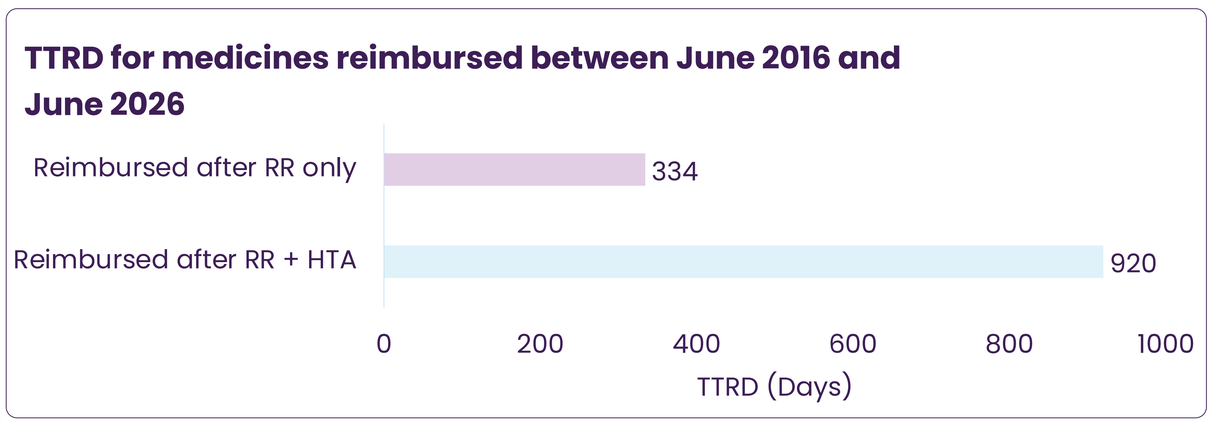
05. Results

FIGURE 1 | Reimbursement route for products assessed by the NCPE



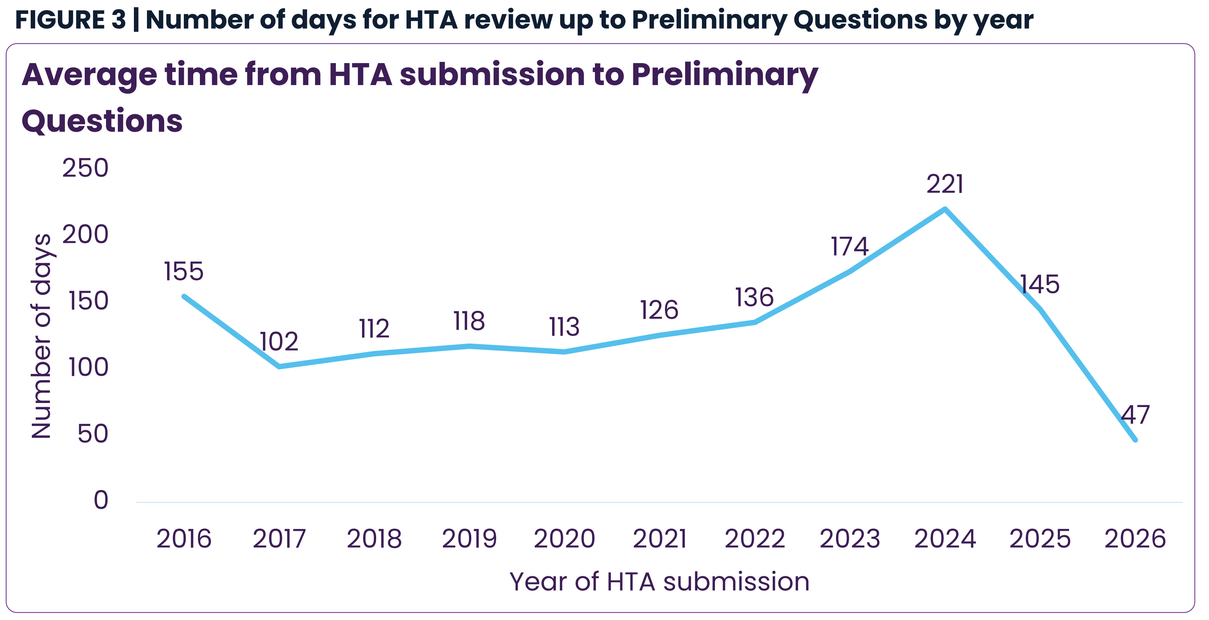
Overall average TTR for medicines reimbursed between June 2016 and June 2026 was **595 days**

FIGURE 2 | Time to reimbursement-by-reimbursement route



The **44.1%** of applications that required a **full HTA** had a **significantly longer average TTR of 920 days.**

FIGURE 3 | Number of days for HTA review up to Preliminary Questions by year

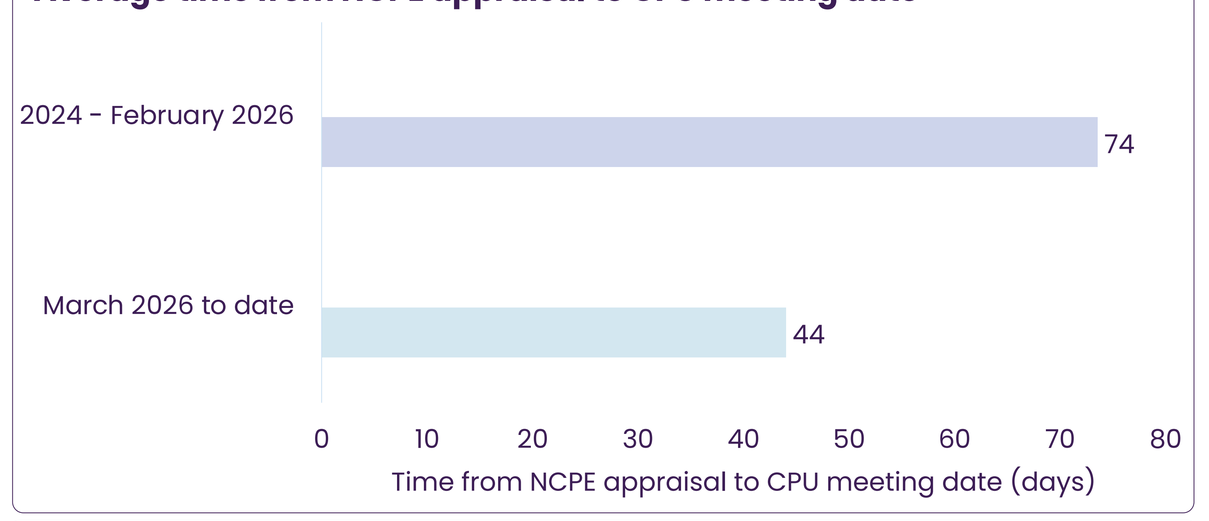


The **overall average** from HTA submission to Preliminary Questions was **137 days**. Submissions between **2023 – 2025 had a higher average time of 180 days.**

HSE-CPU timelines: subgroup analyses

Overall average time from NCPE appraisal to CPU meeting date was 71 days

FIGURE 4 | Time from NCPE appraisal to CPU meeting date



Early data shows time **from NCPE appraisal to CPU meeting** has **improved by ~30 days** since the implementation of the FASPM

06. Conclusions

TTR remains lengthy in Ireland: applications take nearly two years to be approved for reimbursement, on average.

Variations between assessment routes were evident: Medicines reimbursed via RR only reached patients significantly faster, compared with those undergoing a full HTA..

Average HTA review timelines have increased over the last decade, although results for 2026 to date are promising.

Limited data for HSE timelines are available: there are early trends of reduced time to CPU meeting post-NCPE appraisal.

As **more applications progress** through the reimbursement process**, further analysis** can be completed to **understand the effects of the new FASPM on TTR in Ireland**.

Although early signals**,** including timelines at NCPE alongside CPU meeting dates, **show improvement,** focus must be placed on **reducing overall TTR**, to reach the **interim goal of 270-day reviews by Q4 2027.**

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