



31 January 2025

**Our Ref:** FOI 330

Dear

**Freedom of Information Act 2000  
Information in relation to Group B Strep prevention guidelines in Northern  
Ireland**

I am writing to confirm that the South Eastern Health & Social Care Trust (the Trust) has now completed its search for information relating to above which you requested on 6 November 2024. Please accept my apologies for the delay in responding to your request. Thank you for your understanding and forbearance.

A response to each of the questions raised has been provided by the Surgery & Elective, Maternity & Paediatric Services Directorate and is attached in Appendix A.

If you are unhappy as to how this request has been handled, you have the right to seek a review within the Trust in the first instance. You should write to the Information Governance Department, Lough House, Ards Community Hospital ([informationgovernance@setrust.hscni.net](mailto:informationgovernance@setrust.hscni.net)) within two months of the date of this response and your complaint will be considered and a response provided, within 20 working days of receipt.

If, after receiving a response, you remain unhappy, you can refer your complaint to the Information Commissioner at The Information Commissioner's Office –Northern Ireland, 3rd Floor, 14 Cromac Place, Belfast, BT7 2JB. It is important to note that if you refer any matter to the Information Commissioner, you will need to show evidence of having gone through the Trust's internal review procedure to try to resolve the matter with the Trust in the first instance.

If you have any queries about this letter, please do not hesitate to contact me. Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

Yours sincerely

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**Rebecca Manning**  
Information Governance Officer

**Q1. Please supply a copy of your guideline(s) relating to group B Strep during pregnancy, labour, and in new-born babies.**

A1. Please see Attachment 1 – Management of Group B Streptococcal Infection an Early Onset of Neonatal Infection.

**Q2. Please provide the date when your guidelines relating to group B Strep during pregnancy, labour, and in new-born babies were last updated.**

A2. The guideline currently requires updating, however the region in 2017 adopted the Royal College of Obstetricians & Gynaecologists (RCOG) guidance in relation to the management of Group B Streptococcal (GBS) which the Trust currently uses.

**Q3. Please provide the date when your guidelines relating to group B Strep during pregnancy, labour, and in new-born babies are due to be updated.**

A3. The guidelines are currently being updated to include measures and processes for the Trusts new data system.

**Q4. Do you provide information materials about group B Strep to all pregnant women and people as a routine part of antenatal care? (Yes/No)**

A4. Yes.

**Q5. If you do not provide information materials about group B Strep to all pregnant women and people, do you provide them to any of the following groups during antenatal care? (Select all that apply)**

- **Those who have previously had a baby who developed GBS infection**
- **Those where GBS was detected before the current pregnancy (swab or urine)**
- **Those where GBS was detected during the current pregnancy (swab or urine)**
- **Those who are in preterm labour those with preterm rupture of membranes**
- **Those with prolonged rupture of membranes those who request information**

A5. N/A.

- Q6. Please supply copies of the information materials (physical and/or digital) which are given to pregnant women and people about GBS as a routine part of antenatal care.**
- A6. Please visit the following website for information provided in regards to GBS: <https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/gbs>
- Q7. Do you offer testing specifically for maternal GBS carriage to any pregnant women or people in either late pregnancy or in labour? [By this we mean a test specifically intended to detect GBS carriage, rather than a general test for the presence of any microorganisms of interest] (Yes/No)**
- A7. Yes, the Trust follows RCOG guidance to screen between 35-37 weeks if clinically indicated.
- Q8. If you offer testing specifically for maternal GBS carriage in late pregnancy or in labour, do you offer: (Select all that apply)**
- **Testing late in pregnancy**
  - **Testing in labour?**
- A8. No, the Trust do not universally test for GBS.
- Q9. Do you offer GBS-specific testing for maternal GBS carriage to: (Select all that apply)**
- **All pregnant women and people**
  - **Those who previously had a baby who developed GBS infection**
  - **Those where GBS was detected in a previous pregnancy**
  - **Those who request it**
  - **Those in other circumstances (for example, for reasons such as PPRM or vaginal discharge)**
  - **Other (please state)**
- A9. As detailed in A7, the Trust follows regional and RCOG guidance.
- Q10. If you undertake GBS-specific testing for maternal GBS carriage, which of the following specimen types do you collect (Select all that apply):**
- **Vaginal Swab alone**
  - **Rectal Swab alone**
  - **Both Vaginal and Rectal Swab(s)**
  - **Other (please state)**
- A10. Both Vaginal and Rectal Swab(s).

**Q11. If you undertake GBS-specific testing for maternal GBS carriage, which detection method is used by the Microbiology laboratory? (Select all that apply)**

- **Direct culture on non-selective**
- **Non-chromogenic media Direct culture on selective &/or indicator media Broth enrichment with subculture onto non-selective**
- **Non-chromogenic media Broth enrichment with subculture onto selective &/or chromogenic media PCR (for example, Cepheid GeneXpert)**
- **Other (Please state)**

A11. Broth enrichment with subculture onto chromogenic media.

**Q12. Does your lab offer any of the following (Select all that apply):**

- **Enriched Culture Medium (ECM) as part of the routine lab test repertoire ECM offered**
- **With samples referred to another lab PCR as part of the routine lab test repertoire PCR offered**
- **With samples referred to another lab**
- **Other (please state)**

A12. Direct culture on non-selective/selective media as part of routine laboratory repertoire. No routine referral to other laboratories

**Q13. Do you provide training on group B Strep in labour to (Select all that apply)**

- **Midwifery staff**
- **Obstetric staff**
- **Neonatal staff**
- **Laboratory staff**
- **Others (please state)**

A13. Yes, Midwifery, Obstetric and Neonatal Staff receive training.

**Q14. Do you use the Kaiser Permanente Neonatal Early-Onset Sepsis Calculator? (Yes/No)**

A14. Yes.

**Q14a. If yes to Q14, is there a prospective audit in place? (Yes/No)**

A14a. No, there is currently no prospective audit in place.

**Q14b. If yes to Q14, from what gestation do you use the calculator? Please specify weeks and days e.g. 34+0**

A14b. 34+0.

**Q15. Do you use digital platforms to analyse your Trust/Board's rates of GBS infection [invasive neonatal or maternal infections - not non-invasive infections, or infections that are not neonatal/pregnancy-related] (Yes/No)**

A15. Yes.

**Q16. If you use digital platforms to analyse your Trust/Board's rates of GBS infection as defined in Q15, do you use this for: (Select all that apply)**

- **Early-onset GBS infection**
- **Late-onset GBS infection**
- **Maternal GBS infection**
- **Others (please state)**

A16. All group B strep isolates from clinical samples (invasive, non-invasive, pregnancy/non-pregnancy related).