



23 December 2024

Our Ref: FOI 373

Dear

**Freedom of Information Act 2000
Information in relation to Medical Equipment Management and Sustainability
Practices**

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 18 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 Planning, Performance & Informatics 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) 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

Rebecca Manning
Information Governance Officer

SECTION 1: Hospital Demographics

Q1. Please indicate your trust/hospital type and type of care:

- a. Trust/Hospital Type:**
- i. Acute**
 - ii. Mental Health**
 - iii. Community**
 - iv. Ambulance**
 - v. Other (please specify)**
- b. Type of Care:**
- i. Secondary**
 - ii. Tertiary**
 - iii. Other (please specify)**

Q2. Total Number of Beds: Please indicate the total number of inpatient beds in your hospital, including all types (e.g., general, ICU, maternity) if applicable.

Q3. ICU/ITU Bed Count: How many beds are designated for intensive or high-dependency care?

Q4. Annual Admissions: Please provide the total number of patient admissions in the last calendar year. If exact figures are unavailable, please provide your best estimate.

A1-4. In response to questions 1 to 4 please see Table 1.

Table 1

Hospital	Hospital Type	Type of Care	Total No. of Commissioned Beds as at 31.12.2023	ICU Bed Count	Annual Admissions 2023**
Ulster Hospital	Acute	Secondary (Tertiary Plastic Surgery & Maxillofacial Service)	626	10	40,327
Ards Community Hospital	Acute	Secondary	20	N/A*	430
Lagan Valley Hospital	Acute	Secondary	83	N/A*	2,475
Downe Hospital	Acute	Secondary	44	N/A*	1,138
Ulster Hospital	Mental Health Beds in Acute Hospital (MHAH)	Secondary	24	N/A*	145

Lagan Valley Hospital	MHAH	Secondary	37	N/A*	206
Downe Hospital	MHAH	Secondary	45	N/A*	171
Downshire Hospital	MHAH	Secondary	18	N/A*	164

*No ICU beds

** Annual admissions includes all inpatient admissions, excludes day cases and outpatients. No further exclusions applied, includes both elective and non-elective adults, paediatrics, maternity and babies born.

Please note that the Trust moved to a new data patient administration system in November 2023 which has changed how admissions are accounted, with transfers between two or more Trust hospitals now accounting as a single admission.

SECTION 2: Procurement and Inventory Management

Q5. Formal Procurement Policies: Does your hospital have formal policies or guidelines for medical equipment procurement?

- a. **Yes (please provide a copy or summary)**
- b. **No**

A5. Yes, please see Attachment 1 - Trust Medical Devices Policy and Operational Guidelines

Q6. Designated Procurement Roles: Is there a designated individual or team responsible for managing the procurement of medical equipment? If yes, please provide the role(s) and a brief description of responsibilities.

- a. **Yes – Individual**
- b. **Yes – Team**
- c. **No**

A6. No, the Trust do not have a designated individual or team responsible for managing the procurement of medical equipment.

Q7. Inventory Review Frequency: How often is your medical equipment inventory reviewed for excess or unused items?

- a. **Monthly**
- b. **Quarterly**
- c. **Biannually**
- d. **Annually**
- e. **Other (please specify)**

A7. Other, the Trust individual Directorates and Departments are responsible for reviewing their asset registers regularly to ensure they are accurate.

Q8. *Primary Sources for Procurement: What are the primary sources for your medical equipment procurement? Please indicate the proportion sourced from the NHS supply chain versus individual suppliers, and provide any additional details as applicable.*

A8. The information requested is not held on a central information system. To obtain this information would require a manual review of records.

This would exceed the 'Appropriate Limit' as defined by the Freedom of Information Act 2000. The Trust therefore exempts the release of this information under Section 12(1).

SECTION 3: Waste and Disposal

Q9. *Excess/Expired Equipment: What percentage of your medical equipment inventory was classified as excess, unused, or expired in the last 12 months? Please provide a breakdown by equipment type, if available.*

A9. The information requested is not held on a central information system. To obtain this information would require a manual review of records.

This would exceed the 'Appropriate Limit' as defined by the Freedom of Information Act 2000. The Trust therefore exempts the release of this information under Section 12(1).

Q10. *Disposal Responsibility: Is there a specific role or department responsible for overseeing the disposal of medical equipment? If yes, please provide the role(s) and responsibilities.*

- a. **Yes – Individual**
- b. **Yes – Department**
- c. **No**

A10. Yes – Department.

Q11. *Formal Disposal Policy: Does your hospital have a formal policy for the disposal of medical equipment?*

- a. **Yes (please provide a copy or summary of any policies)**
- b. **No**

A11. Yes, please see Attachment 1 - Trust Medical Devices Policy and Operational Guidelines.

Q12. Types of Commonly Disposed Equipment: Please specify the types of medical equipment most commonly disposed of due to expiry or non-use. Include examples and approximate percentages for each type, if possible.

- a. **Surgical instruments**
- b. **Diagnostic devices**
- c. **Monitoring equipment**
- d. **Imaging equipment**
- e. **Other (please specify)**

A12. The information requested is not held on a central information system. To obtain this information would require a manual review of records.

This would exceed the 'Appropriate Limit' as defined by the Freedom of Information Act 2000. The Trust therefore exempts the release of this information under Section 12(1).

12.(1) Section 1(1) does not oblige a public authority to comply with a request for information if the authority estimates that the cost of complying with the request would exceed the appropriate limit.

In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 this statement acts as a Refusal Notice in respect of questions 8, 9 & 12.

SECTION 4: Sustainability and Environmental Impact

Q13. Sustainability Initiatives: Does your hospital have a sustainability initiative for recycling, reuse, or redistribution of excess or unused medical equipment?

- a. **Yes (please provide details)**
- b. **No**

A13. Yes, please refer to Attachment 1 - Trust Medical Devices Policy and Operational Guidelines for further details.

Q14. Disposal of Excess or Expired Equipment: How does your hospital manage the disposal of excess, expired, or damaged equipment? Please provide a breakdown by disposal method and indicate the approximate amount (in tonnes) used per year for each method. (Note: this information is for the year 2023)

- a. **Recycling**
- b. **Donation**
- c. **General waste**
- d. **Other (please specify)**

A14. Please refer to Attachment 1 - Trust Medical Devices Policy and Operational Guidelines.

SECTION 5: Policies and Compliance

Q15. Compliance with Disposal Guidelines: How does your hospital ensure compliance with national or NHS guidelines on the disposal and management of medical equipment?

- a. Internal audits**
- b. External audits**
- c. Regular staff training**
- d. Other (please specify)**

A15. Other, please refer to Attachment 1 - Trust Medical Devices Policy and Operational Guidelines for further information.

Q16. Internal Audits of Equipment Management: Has your hospital conducted internal audits within the last 12 months to assess the management of excess medical equipment?

- a. Yes (If yes, please indicate the frequency of audits and any key findings, if available)**
- b. No**

A16. No, the Trust has not conducted internal audits within the last 12 months to assess the management of excess medical equipment.