

14 October 2025

Our Ref: FOI 1410

Dear

**Freedom of Information Act 2000
Information in Relation to Giant Cell Arteritis**

I am writing to confirm that the South Eastern Health & Social Care Trust (the Trust) has now completed its search for information relating to the above, which you requested on 16 September 2025.

A response to the questions you have raised has been provided by the Medicine, Unscheduled Care and Cancer 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

Olivia Robinson
Information Governance Officer

- Q1. How many patients have a current diagnosis of Giant Cell Arteritis (GCA) (ICD10 codes M31.5 or M31.6) at your Trust?**
- Q2. How many patients have been newly diagnosed with Giant Cell Arteritis (GCA) (ICD10 codes M31.5 or M31.6) in the past 3 months?**
- Q3. How many patients were treated by the Rheumatology department for Giant Cell Arteritis (GCA) (ICD10 codes M31.5 or M31.6)?**

A1-3. The Trust is unable to provide the information for the requested timeframe as it 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).*

- Q4. How many patients were treated by the rheumatology department in the past 3 months with the following:**

- ***Tocilizumab – for any disease***
- ***Tocilizumab for rheumatoid arthritis (RA) only***
- ***Tocilizumab for giant cell arteritis (GCA) only***

A4. Due to the new digital system, the information that you have requested is not centrally held in a way which is easily extracted. 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.

However, the Trust can provide the requested information for the most recent 3-month period available. Please see Table 1 below for the number of patients that were treated by the rheumatology department with the listed drugs and diseases between May – July 2025.

Table 1

Treatment	Number of Patients
Tocilizumab – for any disease	142
Tocilizumab for rheumatoid arthritis (RA) only	86
Tocilizumab for giant cell arteritis (GCA) only	45

Q5. In the past 3 months, how many patients with a primary diagnosis of GCA (ICD10 codes M31.5 or M31.6) were:

- **Admitted as an inpatient**
- **Treated in A&E**

A5. 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 the information requested within questions 1-5.