



14 August 2025

Our Ref: FOI 1239

Dear

**Freedom of Information Act 2000
Information in relation to Diagnosis of Alzheimer's Disease**

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 16 June 2025. 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, Surgery & Elective, Maternity & Paediatric Services and Adults Services & Prison Healthcare 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

Q1. I would be grateful if you could send the Health and Social Care Trust's most recent planning document(s) for the diagnosis and treatment of Alzheimer's Disease including implementation of lumbar punctures (CSF) and Blood-based Biomarker testing. Please include planning documents that cover the entire Health and Social Care Trust and specific department plans, such as neurology, psychiatry, care of the elderly, pathology or memory clinic teams.

A1. The Mental Health Service for Older People (MHSOP) within the Trust has yet to develop the plan to provide access to CSF and blood-based biomarkers. However, Trust staff are contributing to the Dementia Diagnosis and Data Work Stream facilitated by the Strategic Planning and Performance Group (SPPG). The Work Stream has been created under the auspices of the Regional Dementia Project Board to develop a regionally-agreed service delivery model to be implemented in each Health and Social Care Trust which facilitates timely access to accurate diagnosis and treatment for patients with dementia.

The SPPG hold the Regional Plan that the Trust have committed to work towards. If you wish to pursue this request please refer to the SPPG on foi@health-ni.gov.uk

Q2. How many patients were diagnosed with Alzheimer's Disease (ICD-10 codes = G30, G30.1, G30.8, G30.9, F00, F00.1, F00.2 or F00.9) in your Health and Social Care Trust in the last 12-month period for which data are available?

A2. The Trust does not hold data of patients who have a diagnosis of Alzheimer's Disease. However, the Trust can provide the number of inpatients who have had Alzheimer's Disease clinically coded as part of their admission.

Please note that each patient has been counted only once regardless of number of admissions. The latest available data is from 09/11/2023 to 08/10/2024 due to the time-lapse of clinical coding.

Please see Table 1 for the number of inpatients admitted with Alzheimer's Disease clinically coded as part of their admission.

Table 1

Diagnosis	No. of Patients
Total Alzheimer's Disease	614

Q3. How many patients were diagnosed with Mild Cognitive Impairment and / or Mild Dementia due to Alzheimer's Disease (ICD-10 codes = G31.84, G30.1, or MMSE scores = 21 to 24) in your Health and Social Care Trust in the last 12-month period for which data are available?

A3. As detailed in A2, the Trust does not hold the requested breakdown of information.

Please see Table 2 for the number of inpatients, diagnosed with Mild Cognitive Impairment and/ or Mild Dementia, who were admitted with Alzheimer's Disease clinically coded as part of their admission.

Please note that the Trust clinical coding team have reviewed the codes provided for Mild Cognitive Impairment and/or Mild Dementia due to Alzheimer's Disease and instead, would advise that the dual coding of the following codes are more applicable:

- G30.0 with F00.0 for early onset
- G30.1 with F00.1 for late onset
- G30.8 with F00.2 for Mixed
- G30.9 with F00.9 for Alzheimer's & Dementia

Table 2

Diagnosis	No. of Patients
Mild cognitive impairment (ICD-10 = G31.84)	<5*
Early onset Alzheimer's Disease (ICD-10 = G30.1)	11
Mild cognitive impairment (Mini-mental State Examination MMSE = 21 to 24)	115
Mild cognitive impairment (other sources of definition)	295

*Please note, where numbers are 1-4, in line with Trust policy, it is given as <5, to reduce any risk of identification of individual patients.

Q4. Where, if at all, does the Health and Social Care Trust carry out lumbar punctures (cerebrospinal fluid) for diagnosing patients with Alzheimer's Disease?

A4. Please see Table 3.

Table 3

Category	Yes/No
Lumbar punctures carried out within the Trust itself	Yes
Lumbar punctures referred elsewhere and carried out external to the Trust	Yes
Trust does not carry out lumbar punctures to diagnose Alzheimer's Disease	N/A

Q5. Please provide a list of the full names of other Trusts or other organisations to which the Health and Social Care Trust refers patients for lumbar punctures in the diagnosis of Alzheimer’s Disease.

A5. The Trust may refer patients to the Belfast Health & Social Care Trust.

Q6. What is the average waiting time in weeks for a patient to get an appointment for a lumbar puncture to test for a diagnosis of Alzheimer’s Disease?

Q7. How many lumbar punctures to test for Alzheimer’s Disease took place in the last 3-month period for which data are available?

A6,7. In response to questions 6 and 7, the Trust Neurology service do not record information in regards to lumbar punctures specifically in relation to Alzheimer’s Disease, therefore are unable to provide the requested information.

Q8. How many Blood-based Biomarker (BBBM) tests from Cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) to test for Alzheimer’s Disease were conducted in the last 3-month period for which data are available?

A8. The Trust does not hold the requested information as this specific testing is carried out within the Belfast Health & Social Care Trust Laboratories.

Q9. Where, if at all, does the Health and Social Care Trust carry out Blood-based Biomarker (BBBM) tests from Cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) for diagnosing patients with Alzheimer’s Disease, as listed in table 4?

A9. Please see Table 4.

Table 4

Location	Yes/No
Pathology laboratory within the Trust	No
Pathology laboratory external to the Trust	Yes
Trust does not test for BBBMs to diagnose Alzheimer’s Disease	N/A

Q10. Please provide a list of the full names of other Trusts or other organisations, to which the Health and Social Care Trust refers Blood-based Biomarker tests from cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) for pathology in the diagnosis of Alzheimer’s Disease.

A10. The Trust refers Blood-based Biomarker tests to the Belfast Health & Social Care Trust.

Q11. What is the average waiting time, in days, for pathology results to come back from Blood-based Biomarker tests?

A11. The average waiting time is 60 days.

Q12. To what extent are there plans for service improvement of diagnosing Alzheimer's Disease?

A12. Please see Table 5.

Table 5

Plans	Yes/No
Implementation of plans has started	No
A plan exists and implementation has not started	Yes
A plan is being developed	Yes
There is no plan	No
Other – please state	N/A

Q13. Are the plans for service improvement of diagnosing Alzheimer's Disease related to the following listed in table 6.

A13. Please see Table 6.

Table 6

Category	Yes/No
Cognitive assessment services	Yes
Biomarker services	No
None / neither	N/A

Q14. Which of the following services, listed in table 7, does the Health and Social Care Trust have in place in preparation for increased service delivery for Alzheimer's Disease?

A14. Please see Table 7.

Table 7

Category	Related to Administration of Lumbar Punctures Yes/No	Related to Blood-based Biomarker testing Yes/No
Budget	No	No
People	No	No
Training	No	No
Clinic space / capacity	No	No
Governance arrangements	No	No