

21 September 2018

**Our Ref:** RFI 24739

Dear

**Freedom of Information Act 2000  
Information in relation to non-surgical treatments for Facial Nerve Palsy**

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 August 2018.

A response to each of the questions raised has been provided by the Hospital Services and Nursing, Primary Care & Older People Directorate's 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, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF. 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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**Victoria Smith**  
**Information Governance Assistant**

	Question	Response
1	<b><i>Of those with facial nerve palsy who have not made a full or nearly full recovery at 12 weeks following onset, can you provide an estimate of the percentage of such patients who are referred for rehabilitation of persistent facial pain/discomfort and dysfunction?</i></b>	<p>Numbers of patients through Surgical Specialties and Physiotherapy services with persistent palsy are known to be low.</p> <p>The information requested is not centrally held. To obtain this information would require a manual review of records.</p> <p>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).</p> <p><i>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.</i></p> <p>In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 this letter acts as a Refusal Notice.</p>
2	<b><i>If a patient with facial nerve palsy is routinely referred to secondary care for rehabilitation therapy, which hospital(s) and department(s) do you refer to?</i></b>	Physiotherapy Department, Ulster Hospital.
3	<b><i>If routinely referring a patient with facial nerve palsy for therapy, do you refer to a specialist</i></b>	Patient are assessed individually and referred according to their needs and preferences. Referrals are sent to a Maxillofacial

	<b>facial therapist or to a local general physiotherapy team?</b>	Advanced Practitioner Physiotherapist with post graduate experience of facial palsy.
a	<b>Do you have specific centres that you refer to? If so please indicate which ones.</b>	Trust Specialist Physiotherapist, Ulster Hospital.
b	<b>What is the average cost of a course of physical rehabilitation therapy?</b>	The cost of Physical rehabilitation varies widely dependent on the underlying condition and individual client needs.
4	<b>Does the decision making panel for individual funding requests differentiate between referral to a specialist facial therapist (i.e. with a postgraduate qualification) and a general physiotherapist or speech and language therapist?</b>	No individual funding requests have been made.
5	<b>Is specialist physiotherapy or facial therapy freely available to patients with facial nerve palsy or is it funded on an individual basis?</b>	Specialist Physiotherapy for facial palsy in the Ulster Hospital is available as an unfunded service.
a	<b>If not routinely funded, what is the reason?</b>	A specialist Facial palsy rehabilitation service has not been commissioned.
6	<b>How many individual funding requests have you received to access specialist physiotherapy or facial therapy in the last 12 months?</b>	No funding requests have been received however the Trust has received 7 referrals for specialist Facial palsy physiotherapy in the last 12 months.
a	<b>How many were agreed?</b>	7 referrals have been accepted.
b	<b>How many were declined?</b>	Nil.
c	<b>If declined , on what basis were they declined</b>	Not applicable.
7	<b>Is Tropic Electrical Stimulation (TES) freely available to patients with facial nerve palsy or is</b>	This is not an existing treatment in oral and Maxillofacial Surgery Department.

	<b><i>it funded on an individual basis?</i></b>	Trophic Electrical Stimulation (TES) does not form part of physiotherapy treatment in the maxillofacial physiotherapy service as current research states that electrical stimulation should not be used for facial nerve palsy.
<b>a</b>	<b><i>If routinely available, where do you refer patients to for TES?</i></b>	Not applicable.
<b>b</b>	<b><i>What evidence do you use to support routine funding of TES?</i></b>	Not applicable.
<b>c</b>	<b><i>If routinely available, what is the average cost of a course of TES?</i></b>	Not applicable.