

28 April 2021

**Our Ref:** RFI 38013

Dear

**Freedom of Information Act 2000**

**Re: Cycle Threshold Value of All PCR Tests Up To the Latest Date For Covid-19**

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 26 February 2021.

A response to each of the questions raised has been provided by the Hospital 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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**Susan Clarke**  
**Information Governance Assistant**

**Q1. Can you tell me the distribution of cycle thresholds used to provide a positive PCR test? In other words, what percentage of positive tests came at what cycle threshold value?**

A1. A SARS-CoV-2 test is deemed positive when Ct value of a SARS-CoV-2 specific target is  $\leq 40$ .

The Trust does not centrally record data for the percentage of positive tests came at cycle threshold value. This data cannot easily be extracted from Trust records and a manual trawl of records would be required.

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.

**Q2. Also specifically what percentage of the total positives tests were carried out at a CT value between 30-45?**

A2. The Trust does not centrally record this level of detail in order to obtain this information a manual trawl of records would be required.

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.

**Q3. Have you or any other labs you have outsourced to undertaken any viral culture to cross reference with cycle threshold values? If so, what are the results? Additionally, if you have any information about the proportion of culturable samples by cycle threshold can you please provide those.**

A3. The Trust microbiology department does not perform viral culture, therefore this information is not held.

In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 this letter acts as a Refusal Notice.