

Information Governance

21 May 2021

Our Ref: RFI 38104

Dear

**Freedom of Information Act 2000 or
Information in Relation to Hospital Wards Closed Since March 2020**

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 4 March 2021. Please accept my apologies for the delay in responding to you as the Trust continues to rebuild Services following the Covid pandemic and logistics and management of the vaccination programme.

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) 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

**Joyce Batch
Information Governance Assistant**

Q1. How many hospital wards have been shut since March 2020? Is there a detailed list with the names and purposes of these wards?

A1. Within the Trust there were 20 beds closed in Emergency Admissions Unit, this has facilitated the Trust to open a second Emergency Department to manage those with/without symptoms in line with the community definition of covid. The Trust is utilising a 6 bedded approach, which is a different approach than before, to facilitate early flow.

Q2. How has the shutting down of hospital wards affected overall hospital capacity?

A2. In terms of the impact on overall hospital capacity, some patients need to wait longer than we would want for admission, as the number of Discharges Transfers and Admissions in the Emergency Department increases. However, where the Emergency Admissions Unit was, is now Emergency Department space (the Emergency Department footprint has increased). Therefore, the reduced capacity is seen as having some, but not a hugely significant impact.

Q3. Are beds in hospitals socially distanced? If so, how many beds in hospitals have been made unavailable as a result of social distancing measures?

A3. Beds in the Trust's hospitals are socially distanced. There have been no beds made unavailable as a result of social distancing measures.