

2 June 2021

Our Ref: RFI 38373

Dear

Freedom of Information Act 2000

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 number of deaths from Covid 19 from 1 February 2020 until 31 February 2021 which you requested on 28 March 2021.

Please accept my apologies for the delay in responding to your correspondence as the Information Governance Department is dealing with a large number of requests for information, including a backlog of requests as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic which had a major impact across services. Thank you for your patience.

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

Cathryn Hedley
Acting Information Governance Manager

Q1. How many people have died in you hospitals from Covid 19 alone?

I can see deaths published online but they are deaths within 28 days of a positive Covid 19 test, so they could have died from other causes. I just want the exact figure from dates 1st February 2020 to 31st December 2020 of people who have died due to covid and not anything else.

A1. Following a search of our paper and electronic records, I have established that the information you requested is not centrally recorded by the Trust.

However, we can advise that details relating to Covid-19 death statistics are publicly available from the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) who compile this information. NISRA holds a central statistical source of Health Care related data for Northern Ireland.

Please find the link below to the NISRA website;

<https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/ni-summary-statistics/coronavirus-covid-19-statistics>

Q2. The percentage and number of patients with underlying health conditions that were counted as Covid deaths.**Q3. The percentage and number of patients without underlying health conditions that were counted as Covid deaths?**

A2 & A3. 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 letter acts as a Refusal Notice.

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However, the Trust can advise as per the response to Question one above, details relating to Covid-19 death statistics are publicly available from the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) who compile this information.

Q4. The total number of influenza deaths in year 2020.

A4. I would refer you to the response for Question 1 above.

Q5. Please tell me the make and where they are used in the trust, of any of the swabs used in Covid 19 tests that contain ethylene oxide.

A5. The Trust do not hold a central register containing information in relation to the make of the make of swabs and the location that they were used in the Trust. Therefore the Trust is unable to provide this information.

The Business Services Organisation (BSO) Pals (Procurement and Logistical Services) procured the swabs specifically for COVID testing for each Trust and they may hold information in relation to the make of swabs procured. If wish to obtain this information, BSO can be contacted at Foi.bso@hscni.net