

16 December 2021

Our Ref: RFI 41659

Dear

**Freedom of Information Act 2000
Information in relation to Bone Graft Surgery.**

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 4 November 2021. Please accept our sincere apologies for the delay in responding to you. 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

**Rebecca Manning
Information Governance Assistant**

Q1. *We would like to know how many bone graft procedures have been carried out since the start of the pandemic in March 2020 please.*

A1. There have been 8 bone graft procedures completed since March 2020.

Q2. *We want to know what plans have been put in place to address the issue of bed unavailability for these bone graft procedures.*

A2. There is rarely an issue with bed availability within the Trust for such procedures; bed availability is not the limiting factor in proceeding with this surgery.

Q3. *Why are private beds not being utilised - as for other procedures?*

A3. Private facilities in Northern Ireland are not equipped to deal with the complexity of bone graft procedures and they do not have High Dependency Unit/Intensive Care Unit facilities on site.

Q4. *Is there no possibility of cross-border co-operation - as for other procedures.*

A4. The cross-border scheme requires the patient/parent to seek a suitable provider and then submit an application to panel. This process is not managed by the Trust; it is managed by the Health and Social Care Board.