

11th January 2022

Our Ref: RFI 41399

Dear

**Freedom of Information Act 2000
Information in Relation to Covid 19 Testing and Treatment**

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 20 October 2021. Please accept my sincere apologies for the delay in responding to your request. The delay is due to the impact of the winter pressures facing many services across the Trust. Thank you for your patience and understanding of this matter

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 Manager (Interim)

Q1. Can you provide details of how many people died as a direct consequence of Covid 19, COV-SARS 2 and had no other co morbidity listed on the death certificate other than Covid 19 from 1st March 2020 to present.

A1. The information you have requested in Q1 is not centrally recorded by the Trust. To respond to this request would require a manual review of Trust records to collate, analyse and verify the accuracy of raw information provided to the Trust.

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.

However the information you request may be held by the Northern Ireland Statistics & Research Agency (NISRA). NISRA are the official source for publication of accurate data. If you wish to pursue your request I would suggest you contact NISRA on demography@nisra.gov.uk

Q2. Can you provide details of what cycles of amplification were used on the PCR testing within your Trust and if there has been any change to the cycle threshold from 1st March 2020 to present.

A2. Details of the cycles of amplification and threshold values used for the PCR testing performed by the Trust are set out in Tables 1 to 8 below. Please note that Ct values cannot be directly compared between assays of different types. Some assays with multiple gene targets provide multiple Ct values. In such instances rather being based on a single threshold value, Ct value interpretation is based on a more complex algorithm.

Table 1
Seegene Allplex 2019-nCoV PCR Assay in use between 20/07/20 to 21/05/21

Result	Sars-CoV-2 targets		
	RdRP Gene	N Gene	E Gene
SARS-CoV-2 POSITIVE	Ct ≤ 40	Ct ≤ 40	Ct ≤ 40
	Ct ≤ 40	Ct ≤ 40	Ct > 40
	Ct ≤ 40	Ct > 40	Ct ≤ 40
	Ct ≤ 40	Ct > 40	Ct > 40
	Ct > 40	Ct ≤ 40	Ct ≤ 40
	Ct > 40	Ct ≤ 40	Ct > 40
SARS-CoV-2 INDETERMINATE	Ct > 40	Ct > 40	Ct ≤ 40
SARS-CoV-2 NEGATIVE	Ct > 40	Ct > 40	Ct > 40

Table 2
Seegene Allplex SARS-CoV-2 Assay in use between 21/05/21 to 06/10/21

Result	Sars-CoV-2 targets		
	RdRP/S Gene	N Gene	E Gene
SARS-CoV-2 POSITIVE	Ct ≤ 40	Ct ≤ 40	Ct ≤ 40
	Ct ≤ 40	Ct ≤ 40	Ct > 40
	Ct ≤ 40	Ct > 40	Ct ≤ 40
	Ct > 40	Ct ≤ 40	Ct ≤ 40
	Ct < 35	Ct > 40	Ct > 40
	Ct > 40	Ct < 35	Ct > 40
SARS-CoV-2 INDETERMINATE	Ct 35 - 40	Ct > 40	Ct > 40
	Ct > 40	Ct 35 - 40	Ct > 40
	Ct > 40	Ct > 40	Ct ≤ 40
SARS-CoV-2 NEGATIVE	Ct > 40	Ct > 40	Ct > 40

Table 3
Seegene Allplex SARS-CoV-2 / Flu A / Flu B / RSV in use from 06/10/21

Result	Sars-CoV-2 targets		
	S Gene	RdRP Gene	N Gene
SARS-CoV-2 POSITIVE (2 or 3 targets detected with a CT ≤ 36.99)	Ct ≤ 36.99	Ct ≤ 36.99	Ct ≤ 36.99
	Ct ≤ 36.99	Ct ≤ 36.99	Ct > 40
	Ct ≤ 36.99	Ct > 40	Ct ≤ 36.99
	Ct > 40	Ct ≤ 36.99	Ct ≤ 36.99
confirm by second method	Ct ≤ 36.99	Ct > 40	Ct > 40
	Ct > 40	Ct ≤ 36.99	Ct > 40
	Ct > 40	Ct > 40	Ct ≤ 36.99
SARS-CoV-2 INDETERMINATE (2 or 3 targets detected with CT ≥ 37)	Ct 37- 40	Ct 37- 40	Ct 37- 40
	Ct 37- 40	Ct 37- 40	Ct > 40
	Ct 37- 40	Ct > 40	Ct 37- 40
	Ct > 40	Ct 37- 40	Ct 37- 40
SARS-CoV-2 NEGATIVE (Single target with Ct ≥ 37 or no targets detected)	Ct > 40	Ct > 40	Ct > 40
	Ct ≥ 37	Ct > 40	Ct > 40
	Ct > 40	Ct ≥ 37	Ct > 40
	Ct > 40	Ct > 40	Ct ≥ 37

Table 4
Cepheid GeneXpert Xpress SARS-CoV-2 in use from 05/05/2020

Result	Sars-CoV-2 targets	
	N Gene	E Gene
SARS-CoV-2 POSITIVE	Ct ≤ 45	Ct ≤ 45
	Ct ≤ 45	Ct > 45
SARS-CoV-2 INDETERMINATE	Ct > 45	Ct ≤ 45
SARS-CoV-2 NEGATIVE	Ct > 45	Ct > 45

Table 5
Cepheid GeneXpert Xpress SARS-CoV-2 in use from 30/05/2021

Result	Sars-CoV-2 targets	
	N Gene	E Gene
SARS-CoV-2 POSITIVE	Ct ≤ 40	Ct ≤ 40
	Ct ≤ 40	Ct > 40
SARS-CoV-2 INDETERMINATE	Ct > 40	Ct ≤ 40
SARS-CoV-2 NEGATIVE	Ct > 40	Ct > 40

Table 6
Cepheid GeneXpert Xpress SARS-CoV-2/Flu/RSV in use from 04/02/2021

Result	Sars-CoV-2 targets
	E/N Gene (combine CT value)
SARS-CoV-2 POSITIVE	Ct ≤ 40
	Ct ≤ 40
SARS-CoV-2 NEGATIVE	Ct > 40

Table 7
Cepheid GeneXpert Xpress SARS-CoV-2/Flu/RSV in use from 05/10/21

Result	Sars-CoV-2 targets
	E/N Gene (combine CT value)
SARS-CoV-2 POSITIVE	Ct ≤ 36.99
INDETERMINATE	Ct 37- 39.99
SARS-CoV-2 NEGATIVE	Ct > 40

Table 8
Roche LIAT Influenza A/B/COVID-19 (This is a point of care PCR test).

	Sars-CoV-2 targets
Result	N Gene & ORF 1 a/b Gene
SARS-CoV-2 POSITIVE	Ct ≤ 31
SARS-CoV-2 Positive - confirm by repeat testing	Ct 31- 40
SARS-CoV-2 NEGATIVE	Ct > 40

Q3. Can you provide details on how many patients that required medical assistance that were vaccinated were recorded as being unvaccinated due to presenting within a few days of a vaccine.

A3. The information you have requested in Q3 is not centrally recorded by the Trust. To respond to this request would require a manual review of Trust records to collate, analyse and verify the accuracy of raw information provided to the Trust.

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.

Q4. Can you provide details on how many patients within your Trust had their immunity tested prior to receiving any Covid 19 vaccine testing after 1st vaccine testing after the 2nd vaccine.

A4. Checking specific antibody level is not a requirement for COVID-19 vaccination.

Q5. Can you provide details if any of the following drugs were prescribed to patients Hydrochloroquine or Ivormactin to treat symptoms of Covid 19.

A5. The Trust does not prescribe either of these drugs to treat symptoms of COVID-19.

Q6. Can you provide details of how many people were diagnosed as having Covid 19 using the PCR test.

A6. The information you requested is not centrally recorded by the Trust. To respond to this request would require a manual review of Trust records to collate, analyse and verify the accuracy of raw information provided to the Trust.

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.

Q7. If your Trust was asked to provide a sample of COV.SARS2 Covid 19 which has been isolated and perified using Kosh Posulutes for independent analysis would your Trust be in a position to do so and if not explain why.

A7. The Trust is unable to answer this question as it is not clear what is being asked. Should you wish to clarify or rephrase your question the Trust will provide a response.

Q8 Does your Trust liability insurers cover your staff for adverse effects,, life changing injuries or death as a result of taking the Covid 19 vaccines for the purposes of going to work or performing duties connected to their work.

A8. The Trust does not hold liability insurance, but rather is a self-insured public body which carries sufficient reserves in respect of identified legal liabilities, including any proven legal liabilities relating to its staff.