

18 January 2022

Our Ref: RFI 41665

Dear

**Freedom of Information Act 2000
Information relating to Deaths Recorded Relating to Emergency Department
Admissions since January 2019**

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 5 November 2021. Please accept my apologies for the delay in responding to your request, as services across the Trust continue to experience the impact of escalating winter pressures. Thank you for your patience and forbearance in respect of this matter.

In response to your request:

'I would like the following information:

The number of people where a decision has been made to admit them to hospital who have died while in an emergency department in the Trust each month since January 2019.'

The total number of number of deaths that occurred in the Emergency Departments across the Trust Hospitals from January 2019 to 31st October 2021 is provided in Table 1 below;

Table 1

Trust Emergency Department	Number of Deaths
Ulster Hospital	221
Lagan Valley Hospital	9
Downe	7
Total	237

The total number of number of deaths that occurred in the Emergency Department of the Ulster Hospital on a monthly basis from January 2019 to 31st October 2021 is provided in Table 2 below;

Table 2

Arrival Year	Arrival Month	Number of Deaths
2019	January	6
2019	February	6
2019	March	9
2019	April	6
2019	May	5
2019	June	6
2019	July	7
2019	August	5
2019	September	6
2019	October	8
2019	November	6
2019	December	8
2020	January	6
2020	February	6
2020	March	5
2020	April	7
2020	May	4
2020	June	5
2020	July	10
2020	August	7
2020	September	7
2020	October	11
2020	November	7
2020	December	8
2021	January	7
2021	February	6
2021	March	2
2021	April	3
2021	May	6
2021	June	5
2021	July	5
2021	August	9
2021	September	7
2021	October	10
	Total	221

The total number of number of deaths that occurred in the Emergency Department of the Lagan Valley Hospital on a monthly basis from January 2019 to 31st October 2021 is provided in Table 3 below

Table3

Arrival Year	Arrival Month	Number of Deaths
2019	March	* <5
2019	April	* <5
2019	May	* <5
2019	November	* <5
2019	December	* <5
2020	July	* <5
2020	October	* <5
2021	April	* <5
	Total	9

The total number of number of deaths that occurred in the Emergency Department of the Downe Hospital on a monthly basis from January 2019 to 31st October 2021 is provided in Table 4 below;

Table 4

Arrival Year	Arrival Month	Number of Deaths
2019	January	* <5
2019	June	* <5
2019	November	* <5
2019	December	* <5
2020	January	* <5
2020	March	* <5
2021	January	* <5
	Total	7

Unfortunately, the Hospital Services Directorate have advised that the specific information that you have requested is not held on a central information system and would require a manual review of patient 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 addition, information contained within a patient's medical records is considered to be provided by the patient, whether it is information given to medical staff during consultations or other information recorded by health professionals concerning the medical care and treatment of patients. The Trust has a duty of confidentiality to its patients. It is relevant that the duty of confidence continues to apply after death of the person concerned. . The Trust therefore also exempts the release of this information under Section 41(1).b.

Section 41(1) of the FOIA states that:

Information is exempt information if

b) the disclosure of the information to the public (otherwise than under this Act) by the public authority holding it would constitute a breach of confidence actionable by that or any other person.

*These numbers have been masked because there are a small number of individuals within a small geographical area and therefore the individual could be identified. Potential identification of the individual may therefore lead to the disclosure of their personal information.

This information relates to personal information, it is exempt from release under Section 40 (2) and 40 (3) (a) of the Freedom of Information Act, 2000.

Section 40 (personal information) states:-

(2) Any information to which a request for information relates is also exempt information if—

(a) it constitutes personal data which does not fall within subsection (1), and

(b) the first, second or third condition below is satisfied.

(3) The first condition is that the disclosure of the information to a member of the public otherwise than under this Act—

(a) would contravene any of the data protection principles.

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

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.

Should you wish to further clarify your request or if you have any queries about this letter, please do not hesitate to contact me. I would kindly request that quote the reference number above in any future communications related to this response.

Yours sincerely

Joyce Batch
Information Governance Manager (Interim)