

13 October 2023

Our Ref: RFI 53563

Dear

**Freedom of Information Act 2000
Information in Relation to Lower Gastrointestinal Pathway.**

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 18 September 2023.

A response to each of the questions raised has been provided by the Primary Care and Older People 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

Caroline Degans
Information Governance Officer

Q1. Do you have a clear pathway in primary care for the investigation of non-cancer related lower gastrointestinal symptoms that include the use of faecal calprotectin tests? If yes, please attach a copy.

A1. The Trust are unable to respond to this question as this relates to Primary Care General Practitioner (GP) Practices. However, the information you request may be held by the Strategic Planning and Performance Group (SPPG). If you wish to pursue this request, I would suggest you contact the SPPG via FOI@health-ni.gov.uk.

Q2. Are a) qFIT and b) faecal calprotectin tests available in primary care in your area and for what indications?

A2. N/A.

Q3. Are a) qFIT and b) faecal calprotectin tests available in secondary care in your area and for what indications?

A3a. qFIT are available in secondary care and are used as an indication of blood in the stools and form part of an investigation process into bowel diseases and bowel cancer.

A3b. Faecal calprotectin tests are not used for diagnosis although it can be helpful in indicating the level of inflammation in the bowel. For a patient who as yet doesn't have a diagnosis, inflammation can be raised for a variety of reasons.