

13 October 2023

Our Ref: RFI 53668

Dear

**Freedom of Information Act 2000
Information in Relation to Sleep Apnoea.**

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 21 September 2023.

A response to each of the questions raised has been provided by the Medicine, Unscheduled Care and Cancer 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. Waiting time information regarding those diagnosed with sleep Apnoea, and awaiting treatment.
If this can be broken down into severity levels of the condition it would be appreciated.
Total numbers of those waiting would also be appreciated.
This should be based on a snapshot of any day this or next week**

- A1. The information below is based on a snapshot of any day in the week beginning 25/09/2023.

For a patient to be diagnosed with sleep Apnoea they must first undergo diagnostic testing, or a series of diagnostic testing, namely Oximetry and Limited Poly. These are only accessed via thoracic medicine. A patient is referred to Thoracic medicine and at the point of triage the patient is often redirected to a “test first” pathway, allowing the relevant diagnostic tests to be done whilst waiting on a thoracic medicine consultant appointment. Some patients, however, will wait to be seen by the consultant at a routine thoracic medicine appointment before testing is requested. The waiting time must then be expressed in two parts:

Please see Table 1 for the waiting times from Referral to Oximetry Testing.

Table 1

| Referral to Oximetry Testing | |
|--|--|
| Test First Pathway | Urgent 4 Weeks Routine up to 18 Weeks |
| Consultant Appointment First | 216 weeks plus the above |
| Oximetry Testing to Limited Poly Testing | Urgent 3 Weeks Routine 19 Weeks |

Please see Table 2 for the waiting times from Testing to Treatment.

Table 2

| Testing to Treatment | | |
|---|---------------|---------------------------------------|
| | Waiting Times | Number of Patients Awaiting Treatment |
| Severe Sleep Apnoea (Urgent) Patients | 5 weeks | 27 |
| Mild with Symptoms/Moderate Sleep Apnoea Patients | 86 weeks | 263 |

In the Trust here is a fast track pathway for those in urgent need, for example, HGV drivers. This is approximately 9 weeks.