

11 January 2024

Our Ref: RFI 54637

Dear

**Freedom of Information Act 2000
Information in Relation to Hospital Admissions for Drug Overdoses**

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 09 November 2023. Please accept my apologies for the delay in responding to your request, thank you for your understanding and forbearance.

A response to each of the questions raised has been provided by the Planning, Performance & Informatics 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. Broken down by year, since 2020, how many admissions have there been related to drug/suspected drug overdose in hospitals within the Trust.**
- Q2. What is the most common suspected drug in relation to these overdoses?**
- Q3. For the figures outlined in question 1, how many of these patients were, broken down by year:**
- a) Received medical treatment on a ward**
 - b) Required admission to intensive care**
 - c) Number of deaths of patients who were admitted for drug overdose**
- Q4. What is the average length of time a patient stays in ICU for?**

A1-4. Please see Table 1 below:

Table 1

Year of Discharge	Discharges	Deaths	Deaths & Discharges	Admission to Intensive Care	Average length of stay in Intensive Care (Days)
2020	289	<5	292	42	2.8
2021	262	<5	263	22	4.6
2022	214	Nil	214	24	4
2023*	114	<5	115	18	6.2

Please note where numbers in the above table are 1-4, in line with Trust policy, it is given as <5, to reduce any risk of identification of individual patients.

*Please note that clinical coding runs until July 2023 only, so no records will be returned beyond that date.

In relation to Q1, regarding admissions to hospitals, this has been reflected in the column titled 'Deaths & Discharges.' Clinical coding is completed against a patient's discharge activity which is why discharges has been used rather than admission.

In relation to Q3a and Q3b, all those included in the table are inpatients and would all have received medical treatment on ward. Intensive care is both the Intensive Care Unit and High Dependency Unit and counting any multiple ward episodes for the same patient spell as 1 admission and aggregating together the length of stay.

In relation to Q2, the information requested is not centrally held as clinical coding is not broken down to that level of detail and an extensive trawl of records would be required to try to locate, gather and verify the information requested.

This would exceed the 'Appropriate Limit' as defined by the Freedom of Information Act 2000. This represents the cost of one or more persons spending 18 hours in determining whether we hold the information, locating, retrieving and extracting this information. 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 accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, this letter acts as a Refusal Notice for question 2.