

27 May 2022

## Head and Neck Cancer

I refer to the above and am requesting information in relation to same under the Freedom of Information Act.

Please can you provide the following information?

1. How many people were urgently red-flagged by their GP for suspected head/neck cancer within your Trust in the following years?

The table below relates to people, urgently red-flagged by their GP for suspected head/neck cancer in Belfast Trust

	No of People
Jan-Dec 2018	1787
Jan-Dec 2019	1833
Jan-Dec 2020	1469
Jan-Dec 2021	1656
Jan-Mar 2022	422

2. For the same time periods, how long were the longest waits to be seen after being red-flagged & for how many patients?

The table below relates to those patients who were a red flag referral by the GP for suspected head and neck cancer and attended their first outpatient appointment during that period.

	Longest wait (weeks)	No of Patients
Jan-Dec 2018	13	<5
Jan-Dec 2019	12	<5
Jan-Dec 2020	9	<5
Jan-Dec 2021	7	<5
Jan-Mar 2022	8	<5

**Use of < 5 (less than five):** We are unable to provide an exact figure - exempt from release under Section 40(2) of the Freedom of Information Act - as this could make patients personally identifiable. Disclosure would constitute a breach of the principles of the General Data Protection Regulation 2018.

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**3. For the same time periods, of those red-flagged – how many patients went on to be diagnosed with head/neck cancer?**

The table below (based on completed waits) shows the year the patient was referred and how many had a confirmed cancer:

Year Referred	Head/Neck Cancer
2018	56
2019	37
2020	38
2021	48
2022	5*

\*Figures based on Jan / Feb 2022 only

**4. For the same time periods, how long was the longest wait for results of diagnostic tests?**

Greater than 18 hours manual validation would be required to answer this question.

Belfast Trust considers that the cost of retrieving the information would be above the 'Appropriate Limit', as defined by the Freedom of Information Act under Section 12. Section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act makes provision for public authorities to refuse requests for information where the cost of dealing with them would exceed the appropriate limit. The limit has been specified as £450 for public authorities such as Belfast Trust. 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

**5. For the same time periods, how long was the longest wait for definitive treatment once a decision to treat had been taken & for how many patients?**

Table below is based on patients recorded as commencing first definitive treatment.

Year Referred	Head/Neck Cancer	No. of Patients
2018	30 days	<5
2019	43 days	<5
2020	34 days	<5
2021	60 days	<5
2022	32 days	<5

Use of < 5 (less than five): As at Question 2 above.

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**6. For the same time periods, how many patients died of head/neck cancer while waiting for treatment – once a decision to treat had been taken?**

There were no head and neck cancer patients recorded on our system as having died while awaiting cancer treatment.