

26 January 2023

People dying after being put on a ventilator

Dear Belfast Health and Social Care Trust (Northern Ireland),

Please confirm the following:

1. How many people were placed on ventilators in 2018: and how many survived.
2. How many people were placed on ventilators in 2019: and how many survived.
3. How many people were placed on ventilators in 2020: and how many survived.
4. How many people were placed on ventilators in 2021 and how many survived.
5. How many people were placed on ventilators in 2022: and how many survived.

Clarification sought:

You asked me to clarify the following points:

- Do you mean PICU or theatres as well?

I mean all.

- Do you want to know about non-invasive ventilation...which would include the wards?

Yes.

- Do you mean that you wish to know the numbers of people who died after being immediately put on a ventilator OR days after. OR Do they wish us to count people who were on a ventilator, then extubated and then died.

I mean all deaths after being put on a ventilator.

Response

Your request for information is too vast. This extends over various situations.

Patients who die after coming off ventilator support can vary from time of death from minutes to hours to days

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Patients that are pronounced dead by neurological criteria might stay on a ventilator to allow organ donation but be legally dead

Patients that are ventilated in theatre under anaesthesia and dies days later

There is no central record held for patients that receive non-invasive ventilation at ward level (eg HHFNC) so we could not provide this.

This information was not possible to attain within the timeframe. This information is not centrally held. To undertake this exercise would necessitate a manual trawl of incidents which would involve a significant number of hours. This would exceed the costs limit specified in the FOI act.

We estimate that compliance with this (element of the) request for information would exceed the appropriate costs limit. Under Section 12 of the Freedom of Information 2000, the limit has been specified as £450 and represents the estimated cost of one or more persons spending 18 hours in determining whether we hold the information, locating, retrieving and extracting this information.