

21 January 2026

Giant Cell Arteritis figures

1. How many patients have a current diagnosis of Giant Cell Arteritis (GCA) (ICD10 codes M31.5 or M31.6) at your Trust?

Belfast Trust run a Giant Cell Arteritis Rapid Access Service. Patients are referred from Ophthalmology, General Practitioners (GP) and Emergency Departments to Rheumatology via the Medical Officer on call. They are seen in the Rapid Access Clinic and then the Giant Cell Arteritis Scanning Clinics run each Friday.

The Trust is unable to provide the number of patients with a current diagnosis of GCA, as this data is not held centrally. To provide the information would involve a manual trawl of records that would require more than 18 hours work to complete.

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.

2. How many patients have been newly diagnosed with Giant Cell Arteritis (GCA) (ICD10 codes M31.5 or M31.6) in the past 3 months?

There have been 87 patients with a primary diagnosis of GCA in the last three months.

3. How many patients were treated by the Rheumatology Department for Giant Cell Arteritis (GCA) (ICD10 codes M31.5 or M31.6)?

As above, Belfast Trust is unable to provide the number of patients treated by Rheumatology for GCA, as this data is not held centrally. To provide the information would involve a manual trawl of records that would require more than 18 hours work to complete.

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4. How many patients were treated by the Rheumatology Department in the past 3 months with the following:

- **Tocilizumab – for any disease** 112
- **Tocilizumab for rheumatoid arthritis (RA) only** 19
- **Tocilizumab for giant cell arteritis (GCA) only** <5

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

5. In the past 3 months, how many patients with a primary diagnosis of GCA (ICD10 codes M31.5 or M31.6) were:

- **Admitted as an inpatient**

There were no hospital admissions for Giant cell arteritis in the period. Patients are reviewed as outpatients.

- **Treated in A&E**

From 19 October 2025 to 19 January 2026, <5 patients were diagnosed and treated in Emergency Department for Giant Cell Arteritis (M31.5 & M31.6)

We are unable to provide an exact figure - exempt from release under Section 40(2) of the Freedom of Information Act - Personal Information relating to a third party.