

30 January 2025

Circumcision Significant Harm

Please provide data for the number of referrals due to significant harm related to circumcision of children for each of the last ten years.

The first question refers to the number of children referred to Belfast Trust following a circumcision done outside of the hospital (where there have been complications).

The Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children (RBHSC) would not capture information for children who had a circumcision procedure elsewhere and then presented to RBHSC with complications.

Even if the Trust could pull individual patient notes to complete a manual trawl to try to locate any such information this would require significantly more than 18 hours work.

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.

If possible, please disaggregate the data into therapeutic (for a medical reason) and non-therapeutic (for religious/cultural reasons) circumcisions

The second question asks, of those circumcisions done outside of hospital where there have been complications; please disaggregate into therapeutic (for a medical reason) and non-therapeutic (for religious/cultural reasons) circumcisions, if possible

The Trust assumes that all out-of-hospital circumcisions are for religious / cultural reasons and none would ever be attempted out-of-hospital for therapeutic reasons.