

Freedom of Information Request

Ref: 25-044

12 February 2025

By Email

Dear Sir/Madam

Thank you for your request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. The Trust's response is as follows:

- We can confirm that we hold some of the information you are requesting

1. What are the total number of NHS referrals for primary inguinal, femoral, umbilical and epigastric hernia repairs at your trust in the last 3 years with a year on year breakdown?

We are unable to provide this information. Please note, the Trust does not hold the data in a format that would enable us to fully respond to your request to the level of detail required and a manual trawl for this information would significantly exceed the 18 hours limit set down by the FOI as the reasonable limit. Section 12 of the FOIA provides that we are not obliged to spend in excess of 18 hours in any sixty-day period locating, retrieving and identifying information in order to deal with a request for information and therefore we are withholding this information at this time.

2. What are the total number of primary inguinal, femoral, umbilical and epigastric hernia repairs performed for the NHS at your trust in the last 3 years with a year on year breakdown?

Anaesthetic recorded (Y/N) / Laparoscopic	2022	2023	2024
N	479	493	596
Open	424	453	554
Laparoscopic	55	40	41
Robot Laparoscopic	0	0	*
Y	*	0	0
Open	*	0	0

Please note: Where the figures are between 1 and 5, this has been denoted by *. Due to the low numbers, we have considered that there is the potential for individuals to be identified from the information provided, when considered with other information that may also be in the

public domain. In our view disclosure of these low figures would breach one of the Data Protection Principles set out in Schedule 1 of the Data Protection Act, namely Principle 1. The Trust therefore finds that the Section 40(2) exemption contained within the Freedom of information Act 2000 is engaged. This follows NHS Digital (formerly HSCIC) analysis guidance (2014) which states that small numbers within local authorities, wards, postcode districts, providers and Trusts may allow identification of patients and should not be published.

3. How many of these NHS Hernia patients were treated by Open repair? And how many by Laparoscopic repair? Of these treated by Open repair, how many were done under a Local Anaesthetic?

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4. What proportion of these NHS hernia patients required an overnight stay during the period above or for what period you are able to provide this?

33.80%

5. What is the average wait time for an NHS hernia patient to be seen in an outpatient clinic?

We are unable to provide this information. The referral data provides information related to the clinic, but not the diagnosis, so we cannot differentiate between hernia-related or other appointments.

6. What is the average time between an NHS hernia patient being listed for surgery to the operation being performed?

211 days

7. How many NHS hernia patients have required readmission following any type of hernia surgery outlined above?

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8. How many patients developed a post operative infection within 10 days of surgery?

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9. How many patients developed chronic pain after the Hernia repair?

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This concludes our response. We trust that you find this helpful, but please do not hesitate to contact us directly if we can be of any further assistance.

If, after that, you are dissatisfied with the handling of your request, you have the right to ask for an internal review. Internal review requests should be submitted within two months of the date of receipt of the response to your original letter and should be addressed to:

Data Protection Officer
University Hospitals Bristol and Weston NHS Foundation Trust
Trust Headquarters
Marlborough Street
Bristol
BS1 3NU

Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF

Publication

Please note that this letter and the information included/attached will be published on our website as part of the Trust's Freedom of Information Publication Log. This is because information disclosed in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act is disclosed to the public, not just to the individual making the request. We will remove any personal information (such as your name, email and so on) from any information we make public to protect your personal information.

To view the Freedom of Information Act in full please click [here](#).

Yours sincerely

Freedom of Information Team
University Hospitals Bristol and Weston NHS Foundation Trust