

FOI REF: 23/598

Eastbourne District General Hospital
Kings Drive
Eastbourne
East Sussex
BN21 2UD

23rd October 2023

Tel: 0300 131 4500
Website: www.esht.nhs.uk

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT

I am responding to your request for information under the Freedom of Information Act. The answers to your specific questions are as follows:

I would like to request the following information for the period 2021-2022 or 2022-2023 whichever data is available easily:

1) Name of your hospital or list of hospitals under your single NHS Trust.

I can confirm that we hold the information requested above. However, the information is exempt from disclosure under Section 21 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. This is because the information is accessible to you, as it is already in the public domain and can be accessed by the following link:

<https://www.esht.nhs.uk/our-locations/>

This is an absolute exemption and there is, therefore, no requirement to consider the public interest.

2) How many beds does your hospital or each hospital in your group have?

I can confirm that we hold the information requested above. However, the information is exempt from disclosure under Section 21 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. This is because the information is accessible to you, as it is already in the public domain and can be accessed by the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/statistical-work-areas/bed-availability-and-occupancy/bed-data-day-only>

This is an absolute exemption and there is, therefore, no requirement to consider the public interest.

3) What hospitals (names) does your laboratory serve?

East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust, comprising of: Conquest Hospital, Eastbourne District General Hospital, Bexhill Community Hospital, Rye, Winchelsea & District Memorial Hospital and Uckfield Hospital.

We also serve Sussex Community NHS Foundation Trust - Woodlands and Eastbourne.

And University Hospitals Sussex NHS Foundation Trust's Renal services based in Bexhill.

- 4) How many (~) blood tubes arrive in the lab (pathology specimen reception or SRA) for a 12 month period?**
- 5) How many (~) blood tests does your pathology specimen reception handle during a 12 month period?**
- 6) How many patients does this represent?**
- 7) What % of the blood tubes that arrive in the SRA (specimen reception) need to be re-labelled with a bar coded label?**
- 8) What % of tubes that arrive direct from primary care need to be re-labelled to pass through the analyzer?**
- 9) What % of tubes that arrive from secondary care requests need to be re-labelled to pass through the analyzer?**
- 10) What is the split between blood tests that arrive from primary care and what proportion from hospital care?**
- 11) For hospital patients what proportion of blood tests are from inpatients (X%) and what proportion are from outpatients?**
- 12) For primary care patients: What is the split between blood tests taken in primary care (%), hospital phlebotomy (%), CDC phlebotomy (%) or other (%)?**

4-12 The Trust is currently at the beginning of a large tendering process involving NHS England relevant to the Pathology Network Managed Service Contract. It would therefore be inappropriate to disclose this information into the public domain at this time. Disclosure now would likely result in a breach of our legal obligations with NHS England. Section 43(2) [commercial interests] exemption under the Freedom of Information Act is currently applicable. The release of the information you are seeking at this stage would be likely to prejudice the commercial interests of the Trust and those organisations involved in this tender process, as disclosure would likely provide an unfair competitive advantage to any organisation in receipt of this information. Once the tender process has been completed and contracts finalised, therefore making this information less sensitive, we will be happy to reconsider your request should you still require this information. This is a large tender involving numerous organisations and we expect this process to be concluded in early 2025.

Section 43 is a qualified exemption, therefore the public interest in withholding the information should outweigh the public interest in its disclosure. The Trust has carried out the requisite public interest test and while disclosure of this information would provide additional transparency about this service, it is not outweighed by the commercial prejudice disclosure will cause to the Trust or those companies participating in the tender process. Disclosure in this case would undermine the Trust's trading position and business aims and impact on its ability to negotiate the most cost-effective healthcare services for the taxpayer. For these reasons, our decision is that the balance of public interest is best served by withholding this information at this time. We regret any inconvenience this decision may cause.

If I can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Should you be dissatisfied with the Trust's response to your request, you have the right to request an internal review. Please write to the Freedom of Information Department (esh-tr.foi@nhs.net), quoting the above reference, within 40 working days. The Trust is not obliged to accept an internal review after this date.

Should you still be dissatisfied with your FOI request, you have the right of complaint to the Information Commissioner at the following address:

The Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire SK9 5AF

Telephone: 0303 123 1113

Yours sincerely

Linda Thornhill (Mrs)
Corporate Governance Manager
esh-tr.foi@nhs.net