

FOI REF: 25/249

Eastbourne District General Hospital

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East Sussex
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8th April 2025

Tel: 0300 131 4500
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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 am writing to request information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 regarding support services available to haemato-oncology and leukaemia patients at East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust.

Support Workers:

1. **Do you provide cancer support workers, or similar roles (e.g., navigators, cancer care co-ordinators) to your haemato-oncology patients?**

Yes.

If yes:

- a. **How many do you employ, and what is the Full-Time Equivalent (FTE)?**

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- b. **What is their average caseload?**

Not monitored - as they care for all Haematology patients.

- c. **How many are employed by a third party (e.g., charity), and what is the FTE?**

Not applicable.

- d. **What is their caseload?**

Not applicable.

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**2. What percentage of your leukaemia patients have accessed their services?
Counselling Services:**

The Trust holds the information you have requested but not in the format that you have requested and, to provide the information, it would require a manual review of the records, and it is estimated that this would take longer than 18 hours. Section 12(1) of the Act allows a public authority to refuse to comply with a request for information if the authority estimates that the cost of compliance would exceed the 'appropriate limit', as defined by the Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004 (the Regulations). These state that this cost limit is £450 for public authorities which are not part of central government or the armed forces. The costs are calculated at £25 per hour per person regardless of the rate of pay, which means that the limit will be exceeded if the work involved would exceed 18 hours.

A sampling exercise has not been undertaken to support this estimate, but it is based on the need to look through all individual referrals to the cancer counselling and holistic needs assessments within East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust (ESHT) then do a manual search to see what the original diagnosis was and then calculate the averages and other required data sets. Through previous FOI's requests we estimate this will take more than 24 hours.

3. Do you provide counselling or psychological support for leukaemia patients through:

a) Mental health professionals?

Yes - Cancer counselling service.

b) Digital platforms (e.g., apps)?

No.

c) Any other relevant services?

No.

4. How many staff do you employ to provide cancer emotional support, and what is the FTE?

1.0 wte Cancer counsellor.

5. What are:

a) The average,

b) The minimum, and

c) The maximum waiting times from referral to first appointment or first access point for emotional support services?

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Section 12 applied, please see response to Q2.

6. **How do patients get referred to these services (e.g., clinical nurse specialist, GP, self-referral)?**

CNS/ Self/ GP

7. **Are there any limits on the number of sessions or amount of time cancer patients can access counselling?**

10 sessions but repeat referrals if required.

8. **What percentage of all cancer patients you care for access emotional support in-house?**

All patients are offered Holistic needs assessment and care planning where appropriate.

9. **What percentage of leukaemia patients you care for access emotional support?**

All patients - as above.

Welfare Support:

10. **Do you offer welfare advice or practical support (e.g., benefits, financial help, transport) to:**

- a) **All cancer patients?**

Yes, via Holistic needs assessment.

- b) **Leukaemia patients?**

Yes, via Holistic needs assessment.

11. **How do patients access this support, and how is the information shared with them?**

Via Care plan.

12. **How many staff and FTE staff are responsible for delivering welfare support services?**

6.0 FTE

13. **How many leukaemia patients accessed welfare support in the past 12 months? What percentage of the total leukaemia patients you care for does this represent?**

We do not hold this data as welfare support information is not managed by ESHT but the Macmillan money advice service.

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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

Freedom of Information Department
esh-tr.foi@nhs.net