

23rd April 2026

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

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

Further to your recent request for information made under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000, I now set out our answers to your specific questions, and any clarifications sought and provided, as follows:

I request the following information for the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2026:

- 1) The total number of deceased persons whose bodies were held in your mortuary for more than 30 days before release.**

For the period April 2023 (when data was first recorded) to February 2026, there were 240 patients across our hospitals, Conquest Hospital and Eastbourne District General Hospital, with a length of stay greater than 30 days.

- 2) The top 3 causes of this, with numbers.**

- No next of kin / Solicitor involvement
- Family requiring help with funding from DWP
- Local Authority / contract Funerals

East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust does not centrally record the cause of delay of releasing a body from the mortuary. To enable the Trust to provide the number of each of the top 3 causes for delay of more than 30 days would require a manual review of deceased patients' records which we estimate would take in excess of 18 hours. We are therefore applying Section 12(1) to this part of your request.

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. The Trust estimates that the cost of complying with this request would significantly exceed the above limit.

I trust this information is helpful in its detail or explanation however, if you are dissatisfied with the response, then you have the right to request an internal review. If you wish to seek an internal review, please write to the Freedom of Information Team at esh-tr.foi@nhs.net

quoting the above FOI reference number, within 40 working days. Please note the Trust is not obliged to accept a request for an internal review after this time period.

Yours faithfully

Freedom of Information (FOI) Team
East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust
0300 131 4716
Core Hours of Business: Monday to Friday 9.00am to 4.00pm