

FOI REF: 26/265

8<sup>th</sup> May 2026

Tel: 0300 131 4500  
Website: [www.esht.nhs.uk](http://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 would like to request the following information regarding waiting times in 'Fit to Sit' areas from 2021 to 2025. Please could you provide, for each year:**

- a) **The number of patients waiting more than 4, 6, 12 and 24 hours respectively in 'Fit to Sit' areas.**
- b) **The number of patients in each of these categories who were over 75 years old.**
- c) **The longest wait in a 'Fit to Sit' area each year.**

East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust does not centrally record waiting times in 'Fit to Sit'. To enable the Trust to provide this information would require a manual review of the medical records of every patient that attended Conquest Hospital and Eastbourne District General Hospital for the period 2021 to 2025. Our Emergency Departments see in excess of 10,000 patients every month; for example, in December 2025, our ED's combined saw 12,757 attendances. To review these medical records for just one month we estimate would take 1,063 hours. We are therefore applying Section 12(1) to 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](mailto: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