

13th October 2026

Eastbourne District General Hospital

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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 am writing to request the following information in relation to your Trust's ophthalmology services over the past five financial years (2021-22 to 2025-26 inclusive).

1) Waiting Times by Sub-Specialty:

Please provide the number of patients waiting and mean/median waiting times (measured from referral receipt to first outpatient appointment) for ophthalmology as a whole, and broken down by the following sub-specialties (or however your Trust categorises these). Whilst these are request for the last 5 financial years, if it is only possible to give a current snapshot, that would also be acceptable:

It is not possible to provide figures for the last five financial years. The figures below are a snapshot as at July 2026:

a) Cataract.

11 weeks

b) Glaucoma.

6 weeks

c) Age-related macular degeneration.

2 weeks

d) Diabetic retinopathy.

4 weeks

e) Refractive error/other.

4 weeks

2) Surgical Procedure Volume:

Please provide the following data for each financial year:

- a) Total number of cataract procedures delivered by the Trust (whether undertaken in-house or via contracted providers).

April 2023 – March 2024: 4323

April 2024 – March 2025: 3897

April 2025 – March 2026: 3061

- b) Number of cataract procedures delivered through in-house services (ie Trust staff).

April 2023 – March 2024: 4323

April 2024 – March 2025: 3897

April 2025 – March 2026: 3061

- c) Number of cataract procedures delivered through insourcing arrangements (broken down by named provider if possible, with associated costs/values where available).

0

- d) Number of cataract procedures delivered through outsourcing to independent sector providers (broken down by named provider if possible, with associated costs/values where available).

0

- e) Number of cataract patients transferred to other NHS or independent providers during the year (broken down by named provider if possible).

0

3) Patients Breaching Referral to Treatment Target:

For the most recent full financial year for which data is available, please provide:

- a) Total number of ophthalmology patients waiting beyond 18 weeks from referral receipt to treatment/discharge.

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:

[RTT Dashboard - NHS England public data gateway](#)

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

For the April 2025 to March 2026 financial year, an average of 75% of ophthalmology patients were seen within 18 weeks.

b) Breakdown of breaching patients by condition/sub-specialty.

It is not possible to provide figures for the full financial year, broken down into sub-specialty. The figures below are a snapshot as at October 2026:

Specialty	No.
General	67
Cataract	133
Cornea	37
Glaucoma	22
Laser	34
Ocular Plastics	164

c) For the subset of breaching patients, the number awaiting a first outpatient appointment versus those awaiting treatment/surgery.

Specialty	Awaiting Outpatient Appointment	Awaiting Treatment/Surgery
General	56	11
Cataract	71	62
Cornea	34	3
Glaucoma	16	6
Laser	34	0
Ocular Plastics	82	82

4) Referral Patterns:

Please provide the total number of referrals received for ophthalmology services in each financial year, broken down by:

The figures provided below are an average of one month of the current financial year:

a) Referrals for cataract assessment.

141

b) Referrals for other conditions.

593

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