

Ref. No: FOI2038  
Date: 08/09/2025  
Subject: Rhinitis medicamentosa

## REQUEST

Please provide me with the following information if possible:

1. Number of patients referrals to an ENT specialist referencing rhinitis medicamentosa AND/OR nasal spray overuse/dependency at this Trust between August 2018 and August 2025
2. If possible, also indicate how many of such referrals resulted in a patient undergoing surgery

IF providing data from 2018 to 2025 is not possible, please let me know the numbers you can get - even if it is just the past year then that is fine.

## RESPONSE

### Response (Including refusal of request under section 12):

Section 12 of the FOIA allows a public authority to refuse a request where it estimates that it would exceed the appropriate limit to comply with the request. The relevant section states:

*12. (1) - Section 1(1) does not oblige a public authority to comply with a request for information if the authority estimates that the cost of complying with the request would exceed the appropriate limit.*

where the appropriate limit is equal to 18 hours of staff time as set by the *Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulation 2004*

In determining the time limit, the Trust can only take into account

- determining whether the information is held;
- locating the information, or a document containing it;
- retrieving the information, or a document containing it; and
- extracting the information from a document containing it.

In order to determine whether the information is held in respect of your request, the Trust would need to **review** all ENT appointments which are vast 132134 in the years requested. A simple report cannot be produced.

**Calculation** - Across the Trust there were 132134 presentations into ENT If it took ten minutes to review each event, the total time for determining whether the information is held and retrieving this information would equal 22022 hours<sup>1</sup>

### **Advice and Assistance**

Under section 16 of the FOIA, advice and assistance should be provided to allow the request to come under the appropriate limit by scaling or modifying the request.

### **Unable to narrow**

However, as the information is not readily available and the number of attendances so large, it would not be easy to scale down the request in this instance, for example, to one site. It would also not be possible to scale the request to one month as this would still exceed the time limit.

Unfortunately, the Trust is unable to provide further assistance in this instance.

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<sup>1</sup> 132134 attendances \* 10 minute to review each event 1321320 minutes  
1321320 minutes = 22022 hours,