

Ref. No: 1768
Date: 20/05/25
Subject: Ketamine Attendances at A&E

REQUEST

1. The number of A&E attendances for which “ketamine” was recorded – either in the patient notes or in the free text field “reason for visit”.
2. Could you please provide me with these figures for the years 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024 and 2025 [most up-to-date figure available]:
3. Could you please break down these figures by age group.

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.

To determine whether the information is held in respect of your request, the Trust would need to **review** the A&E records looking for the words Ketamine in the medical notes or free text for the financial years requested. A simple report cannot be produced as there is not a specific code relating to Ketamine.

Calculation - Across the Trust there are many thousands of presentations to A&E for lots of varied reasons the trust can produce the records using the presenting complaints of Overdose, Psychiatric problems, Strange in Manner, Standby, Generally Unwell. It could also be picked up in notes with other presenting complaints depending on how the patient presented. The trust has reviewed these, and the result is more than 18719 attendances in the years requested (this figure does not include presentations which are free text). If it took two minutes to review each event, the total time for determining whether the information is held and retrieving this information would equal 624 hours¹

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 year as this would still exceed the time limit.

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

¹ 18718 attendances * 2 minute to review each event = 37438 minutes
37438 minutes = 624 hours,