

Ref. No: 1775
Date: 22/05/25
Subject: Prescriptions issued for sleep medications in the UK

REQUEST

We're looking to conduct FOI requests with NHS trusts regarding prescriptions issued for sleep medications in the UK. For example, how many prescriptions were issued for sleep medications (e.g. Zopiclone, melatonin) in the last 5 years

- Total number of sleep disorders recorded in the last five years (broken down by year) and split by age range - I have attached a spreadsheet with the full list.
- The total number of drug prescriptions issued for the following sleep disorders in the past five years (broken down by year and by drug type e.g. Melatonin, Benzodiazepines, Z-drugs)
- The total number of patients referred to non-drug treatments, such as CBT-I

RESPONSE

- Total number of sleep disorders recorded in the last five years (broken down by year) and split by age range - I have attached a spreadsheet with the full list.

The Trust can only provide the number of sleep disorders diagnosed during a patient's spell in hospital.

	Age 0-17	Age 18-64	Age 65-84	Age 85+	Total
2020/21	50	962	717	56	1785
2021/22	50	1193	911	76	2230
2022/23	73	1268	890	85	2316
2023/24	111	1502	975	116	2704
2024/25	86	1991	1278	118	3473

Sleep disorders included

G47.9	Sleep disorder, unspecified
G47.3	Sleep apnoea
G47.2	Disorders of the sleep-wake schedule
F51.2	Nonorganic disorder of the sleep-wake schedule
F10.8	Mental and behavioural disorders due to use of alcohol
F15.8	Mental and behavioural disorders due to use of other stimulants, including caffeine
F12.8	Mental and behavioural disorders due to use of cannabinoids
F14.8	Mental and behavioural disorders due to use of cocaine
F11.8	Mental and behavioural disorders due to use of opioids
F19.8	Mental and behavioural disorders due to multiple drug use and use of other psychoactive substances
F13.8	Mental and behavioural disorders due to use of sedatives or hypnotics
F51.9	Nonorganic sleep disorder, unspecified
G47.1	Disorders of excessive somnolence [hypersomnias]
G47.0	Disorders of initiating and maintaining sleep [insomnias]
G47.8	Other sleep disorders
F51.8	Other nonorganic sleep disorders
F51.4	Sleep terrors [night terrors]
F51.3	Sleepwalking [somnambulism]
R06.8	Other and unspecified abnormalities of breathing
E66.2	Extreme obesity with alveolar hypoventilation
Z91.3	Personal history of unhealthy sleep-wake schedule
F45.8	Other somatoform disorders
F51.1	Nonorganic hypersomnia

- **The total number of drug prescriptions issued for the following sleep disorders in the past five years (broken down by year and by drug type e.g. Melatonin, Benzodiazepines, Z-drugs)**
- **The total number of patients referred to non-drug treatments, such as CBT-I**

Section 12: cost of compliance exceeds the appropriate limit

Following a thorough assessment, we regret to inform you that Mersey and West Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust is unable to comply with your request, as doing so would exceed the cost limit set out under Section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Section 12 states that a public authority is not obliged to comply with a request for information if it estimates that the cost of doing so would exceed the appropriate limit, which is currently set at £450 for NHS organisations. This equates to 18 hours of staff time, calculated at a standard rate of £25 per hour, as defined in the Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004.

In this case, fulfilling your request would require the trust to search the records of over 9000 plus medical records to match the diagnosis and drug regimen this is

estimated to be in excess of 900 hours. This exceeds the 18-hour threshold, even with reasonable efforts to narrow the scope.

We are therefore applying Section 12 of the Act and will not be proceeding with the request in its current form.

However, we would be happy to assist you in refining your request to bring it within the cost limit. For example, narrowing the timeframe, specifying particular departments, or focusing on a specific aspect of the information may help reduce the burden of compliance.

Please let us know if you would like support in revising your request.