

Ref. No: FOI2634
Date: 24/06/2026
Subject: Ophthalmology waiting times, surgical activity, and referral to treatment performance

REQUEST

I am writing to request the following information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 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:

- Cataract
- Glaucoma
- Age-related macular degeneration
- Diabetic retinopathy
- Refractive error/other

2. Surgical Procedure Volume

Please provide the following data for each financial year:

- Total number of cataract procedures delivered by the Trust (whether undertaken in-house or via contracted providers)
- Number of cataract procedures delivered through in-house services (ie Trust staff)
- Number of cataract procedures delivered through insourcing arrangements (broken down by named provider if possible, with associated costs/values where available)
- Number of cataract procedures delivered through outsourcing to independent sector providers (broken down by named provider if possible, with associated costs/values where available)
- Number of cataract patients transferred to other NHS or independent providers during the year (broken down by named provider if possible)

3. Patients Breaching Referral to Treatment Target

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

- Total number of ophthalmology patients waiting beyond 18 weeks from referral receipt to treatment/discharge
- Breakdown of breaching patients by condition/sub-specialty
- *For the subset of breaching patients, the number awaiting a first outpatient appointment versus those awaiting treatment/surgery*

4. Referral Patterns

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

- Referrals for cataract assessment
- Referrals for other conditions

RESPONSE

Q1

Current average wait for First OP (patients currently waiting):

72 Days

Average wait for First OP (time between first attendance and referral date), in days:

2021/22	65
2022/23	60
2023/24	60
2024/25	62
2025/26	61

Q2

Cataract Surgeries:

2021/22	2056
2022/23	2039
2023/24	2171
2024/25	2151
2025/26	1950

Q3

Patients that breached 18 weeks in 25/26:

Inpatient 18 week breached patients	776
Outpatient 18 week breached patients	1549

Q4

Total Outpatient referrals received:

2021/22	13941
2022/23	14410
2023/24	13138
2024/25	13511
2025/26	13474