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Request for Information Reference: 10.23.84

FOI Direct line: 01325 743700
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Email only

14th November 2023

Dear

Freedom of Information Act 2000 – Request for Information

Thank you for submitting a request for information which we received on 26th October 2023 in relation to County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust (the Trust). Your request has been processed under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and I am now able to provide you with a response.

Your request was in relation to FBC Tests and I am providing the following information in response to your specific questions:

1. What percentage of FBC tests alone (without a biochemistry test such as kidney function) are prescribed for chemotherapy patients per month?

Approximately 10% - mainly if bloods are done on a Friday for treatment on a Monday/Tuesday – repeat FBC on the day.

2. For the services in your hospital, are FBC tests prescribed to be done at the hospital, in a GP unit or at the pharmacy or in some other primary care setting?

The FBC is done in hospital via phlebotomy, on the chemotherapy day unit or via GP/ District Nursing Team.

3. What is the expected time for FBC tests scheduled before chemotherapy - 72h before chemotherapy day, 48h, 24h, or on the day of chemotherapy?

FBC is usually carried out on the same day if the test is done in isolation. The FBC must be done 24-48 hours prior to treatment, dependent upon drug, regime and patient.

4. In the last year January 2022-January 2023 how many cancer treatment appointments for chemotherapy were cancelled due to the patient having neutropenia and/or thrombocytopenia on the same day as chemotherapy scheduled appointment?

The Trust does not centrally record this information and estimates that it would take a significant amount of time to gather the information requested. In order to gather this information it would require a member of staff to manually examine patient notes. Therefore, we are refusing this section of your request for information pursuant to section 12 of the Act on the grounds that we estimate that the cost of complying with the request would exceed the appropriate limit. The appropriate limit at the present time is £450.00 which equates to eighteen hours of work by a member of staff at the rate of £25 per hour.

5. What are chemotherapies that only require an FBC test to decide if chemotherapy can be administered (without other biochemistry tests such as kidney function)?

- Day 8 Gemcitabine – only requires FBC
- Day 8 Lonsurf – only requires FBC
- Cycle 1-2 – Day 15 only Abemaciclib – requires FBC only
- Technically Palbociclib after cycle 3 (drug specification requires on FBC) however given to metastatic breast cancer patients and therefore require routine biochemistry & tumour markers on day 1 of each cycle as part of their ongoing surveillance.

In line with the Information Commissioner's directive on the disclosure of information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 your request will form part of our disclosure log on the Trust's website. However please be assured that we anonymise all responses prior to adding them to the disclosure log.

I hope that this response has provided you with the information you had requested. If you have any queries or wish to discuss the information supplied, please do not hesitate to contact me by telephone or in writing. If however, you are dissatisfied with the way in which your request has been handled and would like an internal review, you will need to contact me in writing at the above address or via cdda-tr.cddftfoi@nhs.

If you remain dissatisfied with our response following an internal review you have the right to appeal to The Information Commissioner at Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF. More information is available on their website; www.ico.gov.uk.

Yours sincerely

Corporate Records and Freedom of Information Facilitator