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Request for Information Reference: 05.21.42

Email: cdda-tr.cddftfoi@nhs.net

Email only

14 June 2021

### **Freedom of Information Act 2000 – Request for Information**

Thank you for submitting a request for information which we received on 17 May 2021 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 cataract surgery procedures. Further to your email on 26 May 2021 in which you asked to withdraw your request in support of alleviating pressure on the Trust during the pandemic, I am providing the following information in response to your specific questions which we had already gathered at the time of your withdrawal:

#### **1. Number of yearly cataract surgery procedures between 2016-2019?**

2016: 2364  
2017: 2365  
2018: 2214  
2019: 3003

#### **2. How many cataract surgery lists with how many patients on them are usually run per week or per month? (excluding pandemic times)**

The Trust would usually run around 7-8 cataract lists per week

#### **a) How many patients were on the cataract surgery waiting list between 2016-2019?**

Please see the below table which provides the number of patients at month end for each month in the time period:

	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>
January	518	604	613	928
February	460	537	670	913

March	415	540	678	913
April	416	551	693	821
May	384	542	719	857
June	371	544	738	887
July	369	531	788	860
August	432	525	881	828
September	506	532	974	823
October	569	467	854	766
November	653	505	818	686
December	659	595	947	743

**b) How many patients were on average referred to your Trust to receive cataract surgery per month between 2016 and 2019?**

The Trust is unable to provide the information requested in this from as referrals are not coded. However, the Trust can provide the numbers for additions to the waiting list if this would be helpful for your request:

2016: 2208  
 2017: 2093  
 2018: 2486  
 2019: 2720

**c) Which characteristics (age, comorbidities, priorities etc.) did the patients have that were referred to your Trust per month between 2016 and 2019?**

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 hundreds of referrals. 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.

**3. On which days of the week are the lists usually run? (excluding pandemic times)?**

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday.

**4. Is there a difference made between patients that require an experienced surgeon and patients that may also be treated by less-experienced surgeons i.e., Junior Doctors?**

Patients are triaged and seen by the most appropriate healthcare professional based on their clinical needs.

**5. If 4 is a yes, for which of the cataract surgery lists (question 3) are either experienced and less-experienced or only less-experienced surgeon available? (excluding pandemic times)**

Please see answer to Q4 – patients will receive care from the most appropriate healthcare professional based on their clinical needs.

**6. How and by which criteria are cataract surgery patients prioritised? (Before, during and foreseeably after the pandemic)?**

Pre Pandemic cataracts were mostly prioritised as routine, although there may have been some patients with co-morbidities that would be listed as urgent.

During the pandemic and for the foreseeable future the prioritisation is as follows:

P2 for within one month

P3 within three months

P4 more than three months

P5 Patient wishes to go ahead with surgery but not during the current pandemic and who wish to postpone

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](mailto: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](http://www.ico.gov.uk).

Yours sincerely

**Joanna Tyrrell**  
Freedom of Information Officer