

Sciatica Referrals

Reference Number: RDF2019-23

Date of Response: 22/11/23

Further to your Freedom of Information Act request, please find the Trust's response(s) below:

Please be aware that the Royal Devon University Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust (Royal Devon) has existed since 1st April 2022 following the integration of the Northern Devon Healthcare NHS Trust (known as Northern Services) and the Royal Devon and Exeter NHS Foundation Trust (known as Eastern Services).

Royal Devon University Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust,

I want to make an FOI request for the following information. For patients with a diagnosis of Sciatica at initial assessment within the Royal Devon & Exeter (RDE) Orthopaedics Department service, that have been referred to the RDE Orthopaedics Department between 1 Sep 2021 and 31st Aug 2023.

- A. Number of initial assessments in the service with a diagnosis of sciatica.*
- B. (Of A) Number of initial assessments that first line treatment is a nerve block injection.*
- C. (Of B) No. of initial assessments that have no further nerve block injection or surgery after their first nerve block injection.*
- D. (Of B) No. of Referrals that have go on to have further nerve block injection or surgery after their first nerve block injection.*
- E. (Of A) Average wait in days from Referral to first nerve block injection*
- F. (Of A) Average wait from referral to surgery. Please exclude all referrals that have not had a nerve block injection prior to surgery.*
- G. (Of A) Average wait from referral to surgery. Please exclude all referrals that have had a nerve block injection prior to surgery.*

Answer: The Trust can neither confirm nor deny that the information requested is held and issues a refusal notice for this request under Section 17 of the Act. The information is not held in a reportable format.

The following exemptions also apply:

Section 12 - Cost of Compliance:

The Trust has considered your request however, we are unable to identify all referrals for sciatica since the diagnosis is not usually determined until the point of assessment in Outpatients; the coding of this information cannot be validated within the appropriate cost limit. To obtain the information would involve the review of individual patient records, the search of legacy data, the validation of data, to carry out this work would exceed the appropriate cost limit as set out in Section 12 (1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and is therefore exempt.

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 Section 12 (1) and defined in the Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004, a public authority is not obliged to comply with a request for information if it estimates that the cost of complying would exceed the appropriate limit. The limit of £450 represents the estimated cost of one person spending two and a half days in determining whether the Trust holds the information, locating, retrieving, and extracting that information.