

Breast Reconstruction Surgery

Reference Number: F4666
Date of Response: 23/08/2022

Further to your Freedom of Information Act request, please find the Trust's response, in **blue bold text** below:

Royal Devon's Eastern FOI Office Response

Part A- Delayed reconstructive surgery backlog

- 1) Following the suspension of reconstructive surgery in March 2020 as a result of the pandemic, when was reconstructive surgery restarted within your trust, for:
 - a. Immediate reconstruction?
The first elective admission for a breast reconstruction procedure was in May 2020.
 - b. delayed reconstructive surgery (*by delayed reconstructive surgery we mean reconstructive surgery that happens after a mastectomy as opposed to immediate reconstructive surgery which occurs concurrently*)?

The first patient having had delayed reconstructive surgery as defined in the question was in July 2020.

What percentage of patients who have been on the waiting list since March 2020 to May 2022 have had their reconstructive breast surgery, for:

- c. immediate reconstruction?
- d. delayed reconstruction?

It is not possible to quickly distinguish within our current waiting list, which patients are waiting for reconstruction surgery as we only record the main surgical procedure and not always with intended OPCS code (we would therefore need to review each patient one by one). To carry out the above. would exceed the appropriate cost limit as set out in Section 12 (1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and is therefore exempt.

As a result, we cannot provide a reliable % of patients having had the procedure and coming off the waiting list against those still currently on the waiting list having been added between March 2020 and May 2022.

- 3) At what proportion of capacity (i.e. average number of patients operated on per month) is the service currently operating at for:
 - a. immediate reconstruction?
 - b. delayed reconstructive surgery?

Taking into account the number of patients operated so far in 2022, there were on average 9 breast reconstruction procedures performed each month.

Please note that we were not able to make the distinction between immediate and delayed as there were too few patients meeting the criteria for delayed as defined in Q1b

4) At what capacity (average number of patients operated on per month) was the service operating at pre-pandemic for (January 2019 – January 2020)?
a. immediate reconstruction?

There were on average 8 immediate breast reconstruction procedures performed each month between Jan 19 and Jan 20.

b. delayed reconstructive surgery?

There were on average 2 delayed breast reconstruction procedures performed each month between Jan 19 and Jan 20.

5) What was the average waiting time for receiving reconstruction in your trust between 2018-2019 (in weeks) for:

a. Free- flap reconstruction
a. Immediate?

Average waiting time from decision to admit date to admission date for a planned or booked elective admission episode was 14 weeks for the period between January 2018 and December 2019.

b. Delayed?

The average waiting time was 27 weeks.

b. Implant reconstruction
a. Immediate?

Average waiting time from decision to admit date to admission date for a planned or booked elective admission was 13 weeks for the period between January 2018 and December 2019.

b. Delayed?

The average waiting time was 11.5 weeks.

6) What is the current average waiting time for receiving delayed reconstruction in your trust (in weeks) for:

7) Free- flap reconstruction

Average waiting time has been 34 weeks for the period since January 2021.

a. Immediate?

b. Delayed?

Please note that we were not able to make the distinction between immediate and delayed as there were too few patients meeting the criteria for delayed as defined in Q1b

8) Implant reconstruction

Average waiting time from decision to admit date to admission date for a planned or booked elective admission was 49 weeks for the period since January 2021

a. Immediate?

b. Delayed?

Please note that we were not able to make the distinction between immediate and delayed as there were too few patients meeting the criteria for delayed as defined in Q1b.

9) What is the current average wait time for additional surgeries (i.e. balancing and correction surgeries) in your trust?

Please note that we cannot identify these procedures with specific OPCS codes, hence it is not possible for us to identify relevant admission episodes for these and provide average waiting times.

Part B- Reconstructive and balancing breast surgery- procedural limits

1. Does your trust operate under any policies or guidance which place limitations on the number of reconstructive surgical procedures a breast cancer patient is able to access, including limiting the number of balancing surgeries (procedures to the unaffected breast to ensure it matches the reconstructed breast)?

The Trust has no specific policies in these areas but Asher to the CCG commissioning rules.

- a. If so, could you please provide details of the limitations and how long they have been in place?. **This question is not applicable.**

Part C- Reconstructive and balancing breast surgery- time limits

1. Does your trust operate under any policies or guidance which place limitations on the timescale for surgical procedures a breast cancer patient is able to access, including for balancing surgeries? **Please see answer to question Part B1.**

- a. If so, could you please provide details of the policy and how long it has been in place?. **This question is not applicable.**