

Title:
Cauda Equina Syndrome (CES) implementation of
pathway

Reference Number: RDF2183-23

Date of Response: 08/02/24

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

We are writing to make a formal request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 regarding the Trusts implementation of NHS England's "Getting it Right First Time" (GIRFT) pathway for suspected Cauda Equina Syndrome (CES).

We should be grateful for the following information:

1. *Has your Trust implemented GIRFT pathway for suspected CES in all of its hospitals.*

Eastern Service answer: Partially for Diagnostics. We have a 24 hour on call service for MRI but only scan for CES between midnight and 7am if the patient would be taken to theatre during this period. Our routine service covers 8am-8pm.

The Trust is compliant within the remit of National Guidance and defined timescales following updated guidance October 2023 and formation of a CES committee chaired by the Medical Director.

Northern Service answer: Partially. Staffing and skill mix limit our ability to provide a 24hr on call MRI service in the North, however this is something being reviewed. The pathway for patients presenting in the North is that if they require a scan that cannot be carried out within the required timescales, that they are referred to the East for imaging

2. *If the answer to Q1 is affirmative, please advise when it was implemented:*

Eastern Service answer: This has been an established level of cover for many years.

Northern Service answer: This has been an established level of cover for many years.

3. *Number of CES related training to staff in the period since implemented compared to the same period duration prior to implementation.*

Eastern Service answer: The Trust has a full cohort of trained clinicians for CES.

Northern Service answer: The Trust has a full cohort of trained clinicians for CES.

4. *Number of MRI scans undertaken for suspected CES in the period since implemented compared to the same period duration prior to implementation;*
 Eastern Service answer: Feb 22 to Feb23 = 241 and then Feb 23 to Feb 24 = 284.
 Northern Service answer: Referrals Jan-Dec 2022 = 93
 Referrals Jan-Dec 2023 = 190
5. *Average time between MRI referral and performance of the scan for suspected CES in the period since implemented compared to the same period duration prior to implementation.* Eastern Service answer: Feb 22 to Feb23 = 5.04 hours. Feb 23 to Feb 24 = 2.16 hours.
6. Northern Service answer: Jan-Dec 2022-6 hrs
 Jan-Dec 2023-3.5 hrs
7. *Number of patients who underwent surgery for CES in the period since implemented compared to the same period duration prior to implementation;*
 Eastern Service answer: This remains unchanged.
 Northern Service answer: Surgery not performed in the North for CES
8. *Breakdown of feedback raised by clinicians with your Trust regarding implementation of the pathway including total number of clinicians who provided feedback, whether positive or negative and its nature (for example resource issue /training/delays/patient safety).* Eastern Service answer: Received positively with CES pathways committee created.
 Northern Service answer: The Clinicians are positive about implementation. There are current discussion with clinicians regarding protected CES imaging slots at 8am.

If the answer to Q1 is negative, please state:

9. *If only some hospitals within your Trust implemented the pathway, please state which ones did not and the reason why.* Eastern Service answer: This question is not applicable.

Northern Service answer: Northern Service currently has 5 Radiographers that cover the MRI service. They also cover the Out of Hours service for the General and CT Department. To offer out of hours MRI service would mean removing staff from the general out of hours which is not currently feasible.

10. *What other policy is followed with regards to the diagnosis and management of CES?.* Eastern Service answer: This question is not applicable.

Northern Service answer: The current pathway for Northern Service patients involves MRI Imaging within 4 hours between 8am – 6pm Monday to Friday. Outside of this, patients are transferred to the East for imaging.

11. *Are the plans for the pathway to be implemented in the future and if so, when? If not, why not?* Eastern Service answer: This question is not applicable.

Northern Service answer: Yes. There is a currently a business plan being submitted for additional scanning capacity, which includes staffing. The Trust is unable to give a timescale.

12. *IV. Breakdown of feedback raised by clinicians with your Trust regarding lack of implementation of the pathway including total number of clinicians who provided feedback, whether positive or negative and its nature (for example resource issue /training/delays/patient safety)* Eastern Service answer: This question is not applicable.

Northern Service answer:. The Clinicians are positive about implementation. There is current discussion with clinicians regarding protected CES imaging slots at 8am.