

FOI 3179

1st July 2025

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 – INFORMATION REQUEST

I would be grateful if you could send the Health and Social Care Trust’s most recent planning document(s) for the diagnosis and treatment of Alzheimer’s Disease including implementation of lumbar punctures (CSF) and Blood-based Biomarker testing. Please include planning documents that cover the entire Health and Social Care Trust and specific department plans, such as neurology, psychiatry, care of the elderly, pathology or memory clinic teams.

Response:

The Southern Health and Social Care Trust do not hold planning documents relating to the diagnosis and treatment of Alzheimer’s disease including implementation of lumbar punctures (CSF) and Blood-based Biomarker testing.

How many patients were diagnosed with Alzheimer’s Disease (ICD-10 codes = G30, G30.1, G30.8, G30.9, F00, F00.1, F00.2 or F00.9) in your Health and Social Care Trust in the last 12-month period for which data are available?

Response:

	Number of patients
Total Alzheimer’ Disease	556 (Year 24/25)

How many patients were diagnosed with Mild Cognitive Impairment and / or Mild Dementia due to Alzheimer’s Disease (ICD-10 codes = G31.84, G30.1, or MMSE scores = 21 to 24) in your Health and Social Care Trust in the last 12-month period for which data are available?

Response:

	Number of patients
Mild cognitive impairment (ICD-10 = G31.84)	61
Early onset Alzheimer’s Disease (ICD-10 = G30.1)	10

Mild cognitive impairment (<i>Mini-mental State Examination MMSE = 21 to 24</i>)	NA
Mild cognitive impairment (<i>other sources of definition</i>)	61

Where, if at all, does the Health and Social Care Trust carry out lumbar punctures (cerebrospinal fluid) for diagnosing patients with Alzheimer's Disease?

Response:

	Yes / No
Lumbar punctures carried out within the Trust itself	No
Lumbar punctures referred elsewhere and carried out external to the Trust	Yes
Trust does not carry out lumbar punctures to diagnose Alzheimer's Disease	

Please provide a list of the full names of other Trusts or other organisations to which the Health and Social Care Trust refers patients for lumbar punctures in the diagnosis of Alzheimer's Disease.

Response:

Full name of organisation(s): Lumbar Puncture Clinic, Frailty Assessment Unit, MACC
Musgrave Park Hospital, Stockman's Lane, Belfast, BT9 7JB

What is the average waiting time for a patient to get an appointment for a lumbar puncture to test for a diagnosis of Alzheimer's Disease?

	Number
Average waiting time (weeks)	Approx 18

How many lumbar punctures to test for Alzheimer's Disease took place in the last 3-month period for which data are available?

Response:

	Number of procedures
Number of lumbar punctures	<5

The Trust has a legal duty to protect patient confidentiality, in line with this duty the figure <5 has been provided where figures are very low. This is because of the potential risk of identification of an individual. In reaching this decision the Trust has taken into account the small geographical area which the Trust serves. In addition the Trust has taken into account the fact that all information disclosed in response to an FOI is disclosed to the 'world at large' and is published on the Trust website.

S 40 (2) (third party information) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 has been applied to exempt the redacted information from disclosure. The Trust does not consider the disclosure of the redacted information to be fair to the individuals concerned as there is the potential risk of identification of an individual(s) which they would not expect, and which would therefore breach the fairness element of the first principle of the Data Protection Act 2018.

How many Blood-based Biomarker (BBBM) tests from Cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) to test for Alzheimer's Disease were conducted in the last 3-month period for which data are available?

Response:

	Number of tests
Number of Blood-based Biomarker tests (CSF)	<5

The Trust has a legal duty to protect patient confidentiality, in line with this duty the figure <5 has been provided where figures are very low. This is because of the potential risk of identification of an individual. In reaching this decision the Trust has taken into account the small geographical area which the Trust serves. In addition the Trust has taken into account the fact that all information disclosed in response to an FOI is disclosed to the 'world at large' and is published on the Trust website.

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Where, if at all, does the Health and Social Care Trust carry out Blood-based Biomarker (BBBM) tests from Cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) for diagnosing patients with Alzheimer's Disease?

	Yes / No
Pathology laboratory within the Trust	No
Pathology laboratory external to the Trust	Yes

Trust does not test for BBBMs to diagnose Alzheimer's Disease	
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Please provide a list of the full names of other Trusts or other organisations, to which the Health and Social Care Trust refers Blood-based Biomarker tests from cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) for pathology in the diagnosis of Alzheimer's Disease.

Response:

Full name of Trust or organisation(s)
Lumbar Puncture Clinic, Frailty Assessment Unit, MACC, Musgrave Park Hospital, Stockman's Lane, Belfast, BT9 7JB

What is the average waiting time for pathology results to come back from Blood-based Biomarker tests?

Response:

	Days
Average waiting time (days)	8

To what extent are there plans for service improvement of diagnosing Alzheimer's Disease?

Response:

	Yes / No
Implementation of plans has started	No
A plan exists and implementation has not started	No
A plan is being developed	Yes
There is no plan	No
Other – please state	

Are the plans for service improvement of diagnosing Alzheimer's Disease related to:

Response:

	Yes / No
Cognitive assessment services	Yes
Biomarker services	Yes
None / neither	No

Which of the following services does the Health and Social Care Trust have in place in preparation for increased service delivery for Alzheimer's Disease?

Response:

	Related to administration of lumbar punctures Yes / No	Related to Blood-based Biomarker testing Yes / No
Budget	No	No
People	No	No
Training	No	No
Clinic space / capacity	No	No
Governance arrangements	Yes	Yes

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