

FOI 3465

15th December 2025

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 – INFORMATION REQUEST

I would like to request the following information under the Freedom of Information Act (2000):

- 1. First trimester screening services**
Do you offer any of the following first trimester screening options to patients?

For each type of screening that is offered, please provide:

- a) Confirmation that it is available**
- b) The total number performed per year for the last five years (or for as many years as data is available, if fewer).**

Response:

Information as detailed in table below.

The Trust is unable to provide the number performed prior to 2024 as this would necessitate a significant manual trawl of tests offered. The cost of locating and retrieving the information exceeds the “appropriate limit” as stated in the Freedom of Information (Fees and Appropriate Limit) Regulations 2004. In order to obtain this information, it would take more than 18 hours and would exceed the £450 limit and is therefore cost prohibitive.

Under section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, Public Authorities are not obliged to comply with an information request where to do so would exceed the cost limit.

Test Type	Test Available	2024
Triple Test	Not offered	N/A
Quadruple Test	Yes offered	143
Combined screen	Not offered	N/A
Nuchal Translucency Scan	Not offered	N/A
Other serological screening	Not offered	N/A
Detailed first trimester anatomy scan	Scan at booking - to identify possible anecephaly	N/A
Cell-free fetal DNA screening (cfDNA/NIPT)	Not offered	N/A

2. **Screening outcomes**

How many positive screening results have been recorded for each of the above screening types for the last five years?

Response:

14 tests were identified as high risk for T21 and 5 or less elevated AFP in 2024.

3. **Counselling provision**

Who provides pre-test and post-test counselling for first trimester screening in your organisation? Please include details of their training and/or professional qualifications relevant to counselling and prenatal screening.

Response:

The Southern Trust undertakes the testing in the second trimester and the test is offered by the midwife at the booking appointment. The woman is then counselled for the test by the Consultant at an initial review appointment. There is no standardisation of training relevant to counselling and prenatal screening, however this is undertaken by a Dr at Consultant level. If the screening report is returned as abnormal, the woman is contacted with an appointment to see her consultant where they will discuss the result in further detail and refer to fetal medicine where they will be offered further diagnostic testing options.

4. **Management following abnormal results**

If a screening report is returned as abnormal, who provides counselling to the patient and what is the clinical pathway for further management? (e.g., referral to fetal medicine, diagnostic testing options such as CVS/amniocentesis, timelines, etc.)

Response:

If the screening report is returned as abnormal the woman is contacted for a review appointment with her Consultant and at this appointment they will discuss the result in further detail and refer to fetal medicine. Further diagnostic testing options will be discussed and offered.

5. **Staff accreditation and training (ultrasound-related)**

Are any sonographers or midwives within your organisation accredited to perform nuchal translucency scans or trained to provide detailed first trimester anatomy scans?

Response:

None of the midwives are specifically accredited. Sonographers do not undertake nuchal translucency scans during the first trimester as midwives complete dating scans.

If yes, please confirm the number accredited/trained, and specify the accrediting body where applicable.

Response:

N/A

Email: foi.team@southerntrust.hscni.net