

FOI 3523

8th January 2026

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 – INFORMATION REQUEST

Question 1:

Patient Waiting Times (As of December 2025) What are the total number of patients currently waiting for a routine or urgent-suspected-cancer MRI scan, broken down by the following waiting time periods from referral date to scan date: a) Under 6 weeks b) 6 to under 8 weeks c) Over 8 weeks?

Response:

MRI

	total waiting	0-2 weeks	2-4 weeks	4-9 weeks	9-13 weeks	13-21 weeks	26-36 weeks	36-52 weeks	78 + weeks
Red Flag	105	62	41	<5					
Urgent	607	50	186	244	31	30	54	12	
Routine	77	<5	<5	19	18	12	11	<5	8

The Trust has a legal duty to protect patient confidentiality and, 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 and the sensitivity of the information requested. 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 exact figures from disclosure. The Trust does not consider the disclosure of the 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

Question 2:

Urgent Referral Waiting Times (Last Quarter) What was the average and maximum waiting time (in days) for an urgent referral for an MRI scan for the last full quarter (i.e. July 2025 – September 2025)?

Response:

MRI Urgent	Jul-25	Aug-25	Sep-25
Longest waiting	579 days	331 days	739 days

Question:

Scanner Operation and Downtime (Last 12 Months) For the last 12 months (e.g. December 2024 – November 2025): a) What was the average daily operational rate (in hours) for each fixed NHS MRI scanner managed by the Health Board? b) What was the total unplanned downtime (in days) for each fixed NHS MRI scanner due to maintenance, repair, or breakdown?

Response:

Both scanners 8am-8pm Mon – Fri (12 hours) and 9-5 sat & Sunday (7.5 hours)
Currently excluding Bank Holidays = approx. 145 hours averaged weekly.
Total unplanned downtime in hours = 171.25

scanner 1	55
scanner 2	116.25
	171.25

Question 4

MRI Scanner Asset List (Current) Please provide a list of all operational MRI scanners currently managed by the Health Board, including a) The model name/number b) The year of purchase (or commissioning date) c) The date of installation

Response:

	YEAR OF PURCHASE	DATE OF INSTALLATION
CAH MRI SCANNER 1	2014-15	11/05/2015
CAH MRI SCANNER 2	2023-24	APRIL 2024
STH RDC MRI SCANNER	2024-25	APRIL 2025

Your request for make and model is exempt from disclosure and Section 31 (1) (a) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 has been applied. Although the Southern Trust understands that there is a public interest in being open and transparent, the information requested has the potential to leave the Trust vulnerable to cyber-attacks. By disclosing these details, this information could prejudice and compromise the Trust’s network/IT security.

In accordance with Section 31 (1) (a) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 - Law enforcement – the prevention or detection of crime, states that information is exempt if its disclosure is likely to prejudice the prevention or detection of crime. ICO guidance states that this can be used to protect information on a public authority’s systems which would make it more vulnerable to crime. It can be used by a public authority that has no law enforcement function:

- To protect the work of one that does

- To withhold information that would make anyone, including the public authority itself, more vulnerable to crime

We believe that putting this information into the public domain would make the Trust more vulnerable to cyber-attacks. The public interest in maintaining the security of our systems and providing safe health and social care to our patients/clients outweighs the public interest in disclosure of this information.

Question 5:

Average Cost of Scan (Last Financial Year) What was the average Health Board cost for performing a single MRI scan for the last complete financial year (2024/25)? Please specify the key cost components included in this figure (e.g., staff, maintenance, consumables, depreciation).

Response:

We don't produce costs for individual MRI scans

Question 6:

Outsourcing Costs (Last Financial Year) What was the total annual cost for the Health Board on outsourcing MRI scans to private providers in the last complete financial year (2024/25)?

Response:

The cost of outsourcing only MRI scans to private providers for SHSCT during the 24/25 financial year was £851k.

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