

FOI 2421

31/05/24

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 – INFORMATION REQUEST

Access to instrumental assessment within SLT services NI.

By instrumental assessment, we are referring specifically to VFSS (Videofluoroscopic Swallow Study) and FEES (Fibreoptic Endoscopic Examination of Swallowing).

Question 1 – Within your trust, do you offer the following types of instrumental assessment?

With a ‘yes’ or ‘no’, please indicate which services have access to VFS and /or FEES.

Response 1:

Service area	Access to Videofluoroscopy	Access to Fibreoptic Endoscopic Examination of Swallowing
Adult acute (do not include Learning Disability or head and neck cancer/oncology here) include stroke, dementia, general acute and neuro disability	Yes	No - under development
Adult Community (do not include Learning Disability or head and neck cancer/oncology here) include stroke, dementia, general acute and neuro disability	Yes	No
Learning disability	Yes	No
Paediatrics – acute	No	No
Paediatrics – community	No	No
Head and Neck cancer / Oncology (acute and community)	Yes	No
Other – please specify		

Question 2:

How many assessments for the following have been carried out in your trust, per calendar year 2019 until 2023?

If your trust provides a regional service, please indicate how many assessments were carried out for both trust domiciled patients and those patients living outside of the trust area.

Question 3:

**Please indicate which hospital in your trust area is providing these services?
Response Q2 & 3:**

Service Area	Year	VFSS – within trust	VFSS – outside of trust	FEES – within trust	FEES – outside of trust
Adult acute (do not include Learning Disability or head and neck cancer here) include stroke, dementia, general acute and neuro disability)	2019	61			
	2020	28			
	2021	30			
	2022	19			
	2023	44			
Adult community (do not include Learning Disability or head and neck cancer here) include stroke, dementia, general acute and neuro disability)	2019				
	2020				
	2021				
	2022				
	2023				
Adult learning disability	2019				
	2020				
	2021				
	2022				
	2023				
Paediatrics – acute	2019				
	2020				
	2021				
	2022				
	2023				
Paediatrics – community	2019	n/a	17		
	2020	n/a	2		
	2021	n/a	10		
	2022	n/a	16		
	2023	n/a	12		
Head and Neck cancer / Oncology - acute and community	2019				
	2020				
	2021				
	2022				
	2023				
Other – please specify	2019				
	2020				
	2021				
	2022				
	2023				



Service Area	Year	VFSS – within trust	VFSS – outside of trust	FEES – within trust	FEES – outside of trust
Adult acute (do not include Learning Disability or head and neck cancer here) include stroke, dementia, general acute and neuro disability)	2019	61			
	2020	28			
	2021	30			
	2022	19			
	2023	44			
Adult community (do not include Learning Disability or head and neck cancer here) include stroke, dementia, general acute and neuro disability)	2019				
	2020				
	2021				
	2022				
	2023				
	2019				
	2020				
	2021				
	2022				
	2023				
Paediatrics – acute	2019				
	2020				
	2021				
	2022				
	2023				
Paediatrics – community	2019	n/a	17		
	2020	n/a	2		
	2021	n/a	10		
	2022	n/a	16		
	2023	n/a	12		
Head and Neck cancer / Oncology - acute and community	2019				
	2020				
	2021				
	2022				
	2023				
Other – please specify	2019				
	2020				
	2021				
	2022				
	2023				

Hospital	VFS	FEES
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Southern Health and Social Care Trust

Altnagelvin Area Hospital WHST		
South West Acute Hospital WHST		
Omagh Hospital and Primary Care Complex WHST		
Causeway Hospital NHSCT		
Antrim Area Hospital NHSCT		
Daisy Hill Hospital SHSCT	Yes (adult only)	No
Craigavon Hospital SHSCT	Yes (adult only)	No - In development (adult only)
South Tyrone Hospital SHSCT		
Lagan Valley Hospital SEHSCT		
Ulster Hospital SEHSCT		
Downe Hospital SEHSCT		
Royal Belfast Hospital BHSCT		
Belfast City Hospital BHSCT		
Mater Hospital BHSCT		
Musgrave Park Hospital BHSCT		
Other – please specify		

Question 4 :

Can all patients (from all service areas outlined in question 1) in your trust area access instrumental assessment if clinically indicated?

Response 4:

No – paediatrics only from outside Trust in regional service Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children.

Question 5:

If instrumental assessment is not available to patients within all service areas (listed in question 1) / hospitals, do you have a process in place to refer patients to other hospitals within your trust?

Response 5:

No

Question 6:



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and Social Care Trust**

If instrumental assessment is not available to patients within all service areas (listed in question 1) / hospitals, do you have a process in place to refer patients to other hospitals outside of your trust?

Response:

Yes

Question 7:

If your trust is not able to offer instrumental assessment within all service areas, what steps have been taken to manage the risks of not having adequate instrumental assessments available for those service users where it is clinically indicated?

Response 7:

Actions	YES	NO
Risk assessment/ inclusion on risk register	Yes	
Business case to increase provision/ develop a service.	Yes for FEES equipment and training	
Exploring alternative means of accessing instrumental assessment including outside the trust.	CYP refer to RBHSC	
Reliance on one form of instrumental assessment when another is clinically indicated but not available e.g., use of Videofluoroscopy when FEES would be indicated as more clinically appropriate.	Currently only VFS available. FEES is under development.	
Clinical Swallowing Assessment only	For CYP yes with onward referral to RBHSC	Adults have access to VFS in Trust
Other – please comment.	FEES service is currently under development	

Question 8:



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If your trust is not able to offer instrumental assessment within all service areas, please indicate any challenges to provision of instrumental assessment in your trust?

Response 8:

Is this a challenge?	YES	NO
Funding – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff (SLT, admin and/or radiology to organise and run clinics, provide governance) Training (including ongoing training needs once clinic established to ensure pipeline of trained professionals) 	Competency in FEES requires support and training for scoping and analysis. Requires funding and time allocated to develop clinical skills and service procedures. Support from level 3 practitioners required also to ensure competency level achieved by assessing SLT. Funding for dedicated time for SLT and radiography to carry out VFS – with support staff.	
Access to training for SLT staff	Training courses for FEES or VFS not available locally. No level 3 FEES practitioner in Southern trust so need to access outside trust support for this.	
Access to training for Radiology staff	Training not available locally.	
Timetabling. i.e., availability of clinic and staff	VFS requires access to X-ray rooms and radiographer/ radiologist so restricted access to clinic times. Training and setting up FEES requires time to develop new service	
Necessary equipment		FEES Equipment has been purchased. Once service is up and running increased equipment would be needed
Other – please specify.	Paediatrics - Not currently relevant as referrals made to regional service. Not sufficient demand to maintain staff competencies if provided locally	

Email: Foi.Team@Southerntrust.hscni.net