

FOI 2786

24<sup>th</sup> December 2024

## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 – INFORMATION REQUEST

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**Please provide the following data on potent synthetic opioids, in particular fentanyl and nitazene, for the period between January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019 to the current date, broken down by calendar year.**

**1. The total number of deaths where nitazenes and fentanyl were identified or suspected from January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019 to the current date. Please break down the data by calendar.**

**Response:**

This information is not centrally held and in order to retrieve this information a manual search of individual patient records would be recorded.

Unfortunately, we are unable to provide the information you have requested as 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. It has been estimated that it would take more than 18 hours to locate and retrieve the requested information. In order to obtain this information, it 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.

**2. Any data on reported overdoses and hospitalisations where nitazenes and fentanyl were identified or suspected from January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019 to the current date. Please break down the data by calendar year.**

**Response:**

| Calendar Year | Admissions |
|---------------|------------|
| 2019          | 34         |
| 2020          | 23         |
| 2021          | 22         |
| 2022          | 9          |
| 2023          | 16         |
| 2024          | <5         |

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 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.

**3. Provide the number of cases in which nitazenes and fentanyl were recorded in toxicology reports for patients attending healthcare facilities between January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019 to the current date.**

**Response:**

These tests are toxicology tests and are referred directly to Belfast Health & Social Care Trust.

You may wish to contact the Belfast Health & Social Care Trust to see if they can provide this requested information. Their contact details are as follows:-

Public Liaison  
Belfast HSC Trust  
1st Floor, Nore Villa  
Knockbracken Healthcare Park  
Belfast  
BT8 8BH

Email: [publicliaison@belfasttrust.hscni.net](mailto:publicliaison@belfasttrust.hscni.net)

**4. Please provide copies of any reports, surveys, or risk assessments on nitazenes conducted by or shared with your health authority during January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019 to the current date.**

**Response:**

In relation to the timescale specified, three documents have been received from the PHA, NatPSA and Department of Health. Please find these attached.

Email: [Foi.Team@Southerntrust.hscni.net](mailto:Foi.Team@Southerntrust.hscni.net)