

Ref. No: 0323
Date: 09/10/23
Subject: Drug-related admissions

REQUEST

Under the Freedom of Information Act, could you please tell me for the years 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023 [current number as of 9th October]:

- **The number of A&E attendances where the word ‘cocaine’ appears in records**
- **The number of A&E attendances where the word ‘ketamine’ appears in records**

RESPONSE

St Helens and Knowsley Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust and Southport and Ormskirk Hospital NHS Trust became a single legal entity known as Mersey and West Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust on 1st July 2023, as such parts of the response may be provided in two sections relating to the hospital sites of each of the legacy organisations.

St Helens and Knowsley sites:

Section 12: cost of compliance exceeds the appropriate limit

This information is not retrievable without a manual review of patient records throughout the time period requested. As said time period includes over 140,000 Accident & Emergency attendances, the Trust estimates that the provision of the requested information would far exceed the appropriate limit.

Under Section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act, Mersey and West Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust does not have to comply with a request where it is estimated that the cost of compliance would exceed the appropriate limit of £450. The appropriate limit is specified within the regulations and represents the estimated cost of one person spending 2½ working days answering the request, either wholly or partially.

Southport and Ormskirk sites:

The below figures have been taken from the 'Presenting Complaints'.

	Cocaine		
Year	12-17	18-24	25 and over
2018	<5	<5	16
2019	0	13	13
2020	0	8	13
2021	0	10	13
2022	<5	6	19
2023	<5	<5	12

	Ketamine		
Year	12-17	18-24	25 and over
2018	<5	<5	0
2019	0	<5	<5
2020	0	<5	0
2021	0	0	0
2022	<5	<5	<5
2023	<5	<5	0

	Mixed Ketamine & Cocaine		
Year	12-17	18-24	25 and over
2018	0	<5	0
2019	0	<5	0
2020	0	0	0
2021	0	<5	0
2022	0	<5	<5
2023	<5	0	0

Section 40: personal information

We are unable to provide precise figures when those figures refer to individuals in volumes of 5 or less due to the risk that individuals will be re-identified, as we are required to protect their identity under the General Data Protection Regulations & Data Protection Act 2018. In such circumstances Section 40(2) and Section 40(3) of the Freedom of Information Act apply. In this case, our view is that disclosure would breach the first data protection principle which states that personal data should be processed "lawfully, fairly and in a transparent manner". It is the lawful aspect of this principle which, in our view, would be breached by disclosure, and in such circumstances, Section 40 confers an absolute exemption on disclosure.