

Ref: FOIA Reference 2023/24-756

Date: 29th February 2024

Email foi@uhnm.nhs.uk

Dear

I am writing to acknowledge receipt of your email dated 9th February 2024 requesting information under the Freedom of Information Act (2000) regarding joint infection services.

As of 1st November 2014 University Hospitals of North Midlands NHS Trust (UHNM) manages two hospital sites – Royal Stoke University Hospital, and County Hospital (Stafford). Therefore the response below is for the two sites combined from that date where appropriate.

Q1 Questions for clinical team(s):

- 1. In 2022/2023 (or for the last recorded year with data available), in your Trust/Health Board, how many of the following did you record?**
 - a) Paediatric patients with suspected septic arthritis in native joints**
 - b) Paediatric patients with suspected prosthetic joint infection (PJI)**
 - c) Adult patients with suspected septic arthritis in native joints**
 - d) Adult patients with suspected prosthetic joint infection (PJI)**

A1 See below;

A) And B) not held by UHNM - the paediatric waiting list is managed by MPFT at Haywood Hospital

For adults: The request refers to “suspected” conditions, we don’t record “suspected” conditions only confirmed/diagnosed conditions, therefore this information is not held.

Q2 Does your Trust/Health Board follow or have any locally developed/adapted guidelines for the diagnosis and treatment of septic arthritis in native joints and prosthetic joint infections in both adults and paediatric patients?

- a) If yes, please state which guidelines have been adapted and please provide a copy of your local guidelines**

A2 The paediatric waiting list is managed by MPFT at Haywood Hospital.

BCGP produces the following guidelines for use at both sites

Paediatric: Osteomyelitis and septic arthritis

Adult: Acute hot joint, septic arthritis and gout guideline

BCGP are exempt from sharing the guidelines under Section 43(2) Prejudice to commercial interests- see below:

Commercially sensitive information relating to guideline has not been disclosed here as we consider that under section 43(2) of the FOI Act: *prejudice to the commercial interests of any party*, is engaged. Disclosure of this information could be commercially detrimental to the Trust.

- Q3 When investigating suspected septic arthritis in native joints in both paediatric and adult patients, is a synovial fluid sample collected before or after antibiotics are administered and commenced?**
- a) Is joint aspirate collected in ED/triage, Assessment unit, inpatient ward, or theatre?
 - b) Who typically performs the procedure and collects the sample? (Please specify job role)
 - c) Does the above differ for suspected prosthetic joint infections? If yes, please clarify how this differs
- A3 The paediatric waiting list is managed by MPFT at Haywood Hospital, for adults:
- 3: Before Antibiotics
 - 3a) ED/triage or Theatre
 - 3b) Registrar
 - 3c) Yes, performed in theatre
- Q4 What clinician would typically manage paediatric patients with suspected septic arthritis in native joints? (please select one or multiple)**
- I. Paediatric Consultant
 - II. Orthopaedic Consultant
 - III. Infectious Diseases Consultant
 - IV. Other (please specify)
- A4 Haywood Hospital for Paediatrics hold this information
- Q5 Are patients discharged before culture results from synovial fluid aspirate are received? If yes, what requirements need to be met before patients are discharged?**
- A5 The paediatric waiting list is managed by MPFT at Haywood Hospital: for adults depends on clinical condition
- Q6 Questions for lab/diagnostic team(s):**
- For adult and paediatric patients with suspected septic arthritis of native joints, what are the mean turnaround times (in hours, or if more appropriate, working days) for results on the following tests from receipt of specimen: (please provide an answer for each result)
- a) Gram Stain
 - b) Culture

- c) **Blood culture**
- d) **White blood cell count**

A6 The paediatric waiting list is managed by MPFT at Haywood Hospital
Adults:

- a) within 1 hour of receipt on bench if urgent
- b) negative results 48 hours. Positive results depends on growth but for most pathogens 16-24 hours.
- c) Incubated for 5 days, bottles unloaded within 1 hour of signalling positive
- d) For joint fluid, within 1 hour of receipt on bench for urgent samples.

Q7 Does your Trust/Health Board conduct PCR testing of bacteria from synovial fluid of patients who have suspected septic arthritis of native joints?

If yes:

- a) **Is this testing conducted on site?**
- b) **At what point is testing requested – when the culture is negative or on request?**
- c) **How long is the average turnaround time for results from receipt of specimen?**
- d) **What organisms are routinely tested for?**

A7 The paediatric waiting list is managed by MPFT at Haywood Hospital
Adults:

- a) No
- b) On request if culture negative
- c) 3-7 days
- d) 16s PCR performed

Q8 Does your Trust/Health Board conduct 16S PCR testing of bacteria from synovial fluid of patients who have suspected septic arthritis of native joints?

If yes:

- a) **Is this testing conducted on site?**
- b) **At what point is testing requested – when the culture is negative or on request?**
- c) **How long is the average turnaround time for results from receipt of specimen?**
- d) **What organisms are routinely tested for?**

A8 The paediatric waiting list is managed by MPFT at Haywood Hospital

Adults:

- a) No
- b) On request if culture negative
- c) 3-7 days
- d) 16s PCR

Q9 Joint question – input from both clinician and lab/diagnostic team:

For joint infections, in your Trust/Health Board, please confirm the following:

- a) Which roles or stakeholders are involved in the design of diagnostic pathways and introducing change/pathway improvement?
- b) Which team(s) hold the budget for investing and implementing in new technologies across the pathway (e.g. rapid diagnostic testing)?

A9 The paediatric waiting list is managed by MPFT at Haywood Hospital

Adults:

- a) Clinical and diagnostic
- b) No specific budget, bids would have to be submitted following Trust governance processes.

*Please note that any individuals identified do not give consent for their personal data to be processed for the purposes of direct marketing.

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This letter confirms the completion of this request. A log of this request and a copy of this letter will be held by the Trust.

If you have any queries related to the response provided please in the first instance contact my office.

Should you have a complaint about the response or the handling of your request, please also contact my office to request a review of this. If having exhausted the Trust's FOIA complaints process you are still not satisfied, you are entitled to approach the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) and request an assessment of the manner in which the Trust has managed your request.

The Information Commissioner may be contacted at:



University Hospitals
of North Midlands
NHS Trust

Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF or via www.ico.org.uk.

Yours,

Rachel Montinaro

Data Security and Protection Manager - Records