



# Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh Teaching Hospitals

NHS Foundation Trust

Trust Headquarters  
Chief Nurse

Royal Albert Edward Infirmary  
Wigan Lane  
Wigan  
WN1 2NN

T: 01942 773291

E: [kevin.parker-evans@wwl.nhs.uk](mailto:kevin.parker-evans@wwl.nhs.uk)

Ref: FOI/2024/10189

Date Received: 9<sup>th</sup> October 2024

Response Due: 6<sup>th</sup> November 2024

Date: 31<sup>st</sup> October 2024

Dear Sir/Madam

With reference to your request for information received on 9<sup>th</sup> October 2024, I can confirm in accordance with Section 1 (1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 that we do hold the information you have requested. A response to each part of your request is provided below.

In your request you asked:

**Please provide the following information broken down by each full calendar year 2019-2023 inclusive, and all available information for the calendar year 2024 so far:**

- 1. The total number of women in labour who requested an epidural for pain relief**  
This information is not recorded, only women who receive an epidural is recorded.
- 2. The total number of women in labour who received an epidural for pain relief**  
2019 = 474  
2020 = 498  
2021 = 481  
2022 = 517  
2023 = 526  
2024 = 369
- 3. The number of women who did not receive the epidural requested**  
This information is not recorded, only women who receive an epidural is recorded.
- 4. The number of women who received the epidural within 30 minutes of making the request (0-30 minutes inclusive)**  
The Trust only reports any instances of pain relief being delayed by >30 minutes. Therefore, the Trust is unable to provide this data as it is not recorded centrally, if recorded it would be held within individual

case notes. As case notes are for the care and treatment of patients, we do not request staff to interrogate them in order to collate the information required to respond to Freedom of Information requests.

**5. The number of women who received the epidural within 60 minutes of making the request (0-60 minutes inclusive)**

2019 = 0  
2020 = 0  
2021 = 0  
2022 = <5  
2023 = 0  
2024 = <5

\*The above figures are based off Datix recordings under Midwifery Red Flags where there has been a delay in providing pain relief >30 minutes.

**6. The number of women who received the epidural later than 60 minutes after making the request (61 minutes and above)**

2019 = 0  
2020 = 0  
2021 = 0  
2022 = 0  
2023 = <5  
2024 = <5

\*The above figures are based off Datix recordings under Midwifery Red Flags where there has been a delay in providing pain relief >30 minutes.

**7. The longest recorded epidural waiting time**

This information is being withheld under section 40(2) (personal information) of the Act. This is because releasing the longest recorded wait time would make individual patients identifiable.

Section 40(2) is an 'absolute' exemption, and the Trust is not obliged to consider whether the public interest favours disclosing the information.

Section 40(2) exempts personal information from disclosure if that information relates to someone other than the applicant, and if disclosure of the information would, amongst other things, contravene one of the data protection principles in Article 5 of the UK GDPR. In this case, I believe disclosure would contravene the first data protection principle, which provides that personal data must be processed fairly and lawfully.

**These figures should not include women who received an epidural during a planned or emergency Caesarean section.**

**If the information requested is only partially available (for example, if the Trust only records the number of women who received an epidural within 60 minutes of requesting it) or available with slightly different parameters (for example, if the Trust only records the number of women who received an epidural within 45 minutes of requesting it) then please provide this information.**

The Trust has a policy of not releasing information when the data involved is less than 5. This is because we feel that such low numbers could make the individuals involved identifiable and therefore may cause undue harm and distress.

To disclose this information would:

- a) Contravene the Data Protection Act principles in that it would amount to unfair and possibly unlawful processing, as there was a legitimate expectation by the third parties that this information would remain confidential, and
- b) Disclosure may cause damage or distress to the individual(s) involved, and that damage or distress would be unwarranted (section 10 of the DPA).

If you are not entirely satisfied with this response, please do not hesitate to contact the Information Governance Department via the email address provided. If we do not hear from you within 40 days, we will assume that we have been able to accommodate your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Yours sincerely,



Handwritten signature of Kevin Parker-Evans in black ink, with the name 'PARKER-EVANS.' printed below it.

Kevin Parker-Evans MBA, FCMJ, CMgr. RN Dip HE  
Chief Nursing Officer & Director of Infection Prevention and Control

**PLEASE NOTE:**

If you are unhappy with the service you have received in relation to your request and wish to make a complaint or request a review of our decision, you should write to: Information Governance Department, Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh NHS Foundation Trust, Suite 9, Buckingham Row, Brick Kiln Lane, Wigan, WN1 1XX.

If you are not content with the outcome of your complaint, you may apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision at:

The Information Commissioner's Office  
Wycliffe House  
Water Lane  
Wilmslow  
Cheshire, SK9 5AF

Helpline number: 0303 123 111