

Trust Headquarters
Russells Hall Hospital
Dudley
West Midlands
DY1 2HQ

Ref: FOI-062025-0001704

Date: 18.7.25

Address / Email:

Dear

Request Under Freedom of Information Act 2000

Thank you for requesting information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

I would be grateful if you could provide the following information for your hospital for the most recent 24-month period available:

1. The average length of time deceased individuals are kept in your hospital mortuary prior to release for burial or cremation.

2023 Average length of time is : 10.9 days

2024 Average length of time is : 10.4 days

2. The minimum and maximum duration any deceased individual was retained in your mortuary during that period.

2023 Minimum duration is : 1 day

Maximum duration is : 208 days

2024 Minimum duration is : 1 day

Maximum duration is : 151 days

3. The total number of deceased released from your mortuary, broken down by:

- Online funeral directors (those primarily operating through online platforms)

2023 65 deceased patients

2024 97 deceased patients

- Local/traditional funeral directors (those with a physical local presence)

2023 2156 deceased patients

2024 2103 deceased patients

4. The average duration of stay in your mortuary for deceased individuals handled by:

- Online funeral directors

2023 average 14.8 days

2024 average 13.4 days

- Local funeral directors

2023 average 10.8 days

2024 average 10.2 days

5. The total number of requests for jewellery to be removed, broken down by:

- Online funeral directors (those primarily operating through online platforms)
- Local/traditional funeral directors (those with a physical local presence)
- **Not able to provide this information as it would involve physically looking at each individual patient passport, but our mortuary policy is that we do not remove jewellery from patients and it is left to the funeral director to do this, my understanding is that online funeral directors will pass this onto families.**

6. The total number of requests for the deceased to be dressed for viewing in the mortuary, broken down by:

Online funeral directors (those primarily operating through online platforms)
Local/traditional funeral directors (those with a physical local presence)

- **Not able to provide this information as it would involve physically looking at each individual patient passport, we do dress a small percentage of deceased patients for both online and traditional funeral directors at families request.**

If applicable, I would also appreciate it if you could share any internal protocols or policy documents regarding the standard retention period for deceased individuals in your care.
Please provide this information in electronic format (preferably as a spreadsheet or PDF document).
If you are unable to give exact answers, please provide an indicative answer.
Any further comments or information you wish to provide would also be greatly appreciated.

Please see attached the Trust's Escalation of Long Term Storage standard operating procedure.

The SOP for escalation states making enquiries after 21 days, please note this used to be 14 days but has changed over the last 2 years due to the length of stay for most patients being longer, this could be either the introduction of the Medical examiners service or different working practices for external services such as funeral directors, registrars, crematoriums, coroners.

The involvement of the coroners, GP practices and social services does seem to account for some of the delays of deceased patient stays.

If you are dissatisfied with our response, you have the right to appeal in line with guidance from the Information Commissioner. In the first instance you may contact the Information Governance Manager of the Trust.

Information Governance Manager
Trust Headquarters
Russell's Hall Hospital
Dudley
West Midlands
DY1 2HQ
Email: dgft.dpo@nhs.net

Should you disagree with the contents of our response to your appeal, you have the right to appeal to the Information Commissioners Office at.

Information Commissioners Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

FOI/REF FOI-

Tel: 0303 123 1113

www.ico.org.uk

If you require further clarification, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely

Freedom of Information Team
The Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust