

Date: 13/09/2018

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST FOI/014322 - Ankylossia (tongue-tie)

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, please could you kindly provide me with the following information for your NHS Foundation Trust (or if you represent a number of Trusts, for all the Trusts you are responsible for).

- How many babies (i.e) below the age of 1) were diagnosed with issues of ankylossia (tongue-tie) in each financial year since 2013/14.

Some cases of tongue-tie may be diagnosed during a new-born's physical examination after birth. In these cases the clinical coding of the diagnosis would be recorded as part of the new-born's admission. If a baby is admitted multiple times then this diagnosis may be recorded at each occasion.

However, this is not necessarily the complete picture as tongue-tie may not be apparent at birth, rather it may become evident as the baby develops, such as in difficulty feeding. These suspected tongue-tie babies are assessed by midwives in an outpatient clinic, where a diagnosis may be established and a corrective frenulotomy performed if necessary.

The Trust does not code diagnoses for outpatient attendances and therefore we are unable to provide these figures. We may provide the number of attendances at these clinics and/or the number of frenulotomies performed but not the number diagnosed.

- Of the babies diagnosed with issues of ankylossia (tongue-tie) in 2017 how many had a surgical procedure carried out by NHS surgeons to resolve these specific issues, and how long did they wait (on average, in calendar days) for the procedure following diagnosis?

Frenulotomies performed at the Trust for babies less than ten weeks are undertaken by midwives, who are trained tongue tie practitioners, rather than surgeons.

Tongue-tie divisions may be performed by surgeons in theatres; however this is rare in children less than one year old due to the increased anaesthesia risk. There were no coded theatre cases for the release of tongue-tie in less than one year olds for the Trust in 2017.

Also, surgeons may perform a frenulotomy in the outpatient setting during a regular attendance as required.

In total, 919 frenulotomies were coded as performed (OPCS code F26.3) in the Trust for babies less than one year old during 2017.

Unfortunately the trust cannot provide an average wait from diagnosis. As explained in answer to the previous question, the vast majority of babies will have been assessed at an outpatient attendance, and unfortunately the trust does not electronically code whether a diagnosis was made. If a procedure is required and consented to during the assessment then the frenulotomy would be performed there and then in an outpatient setting.

- In 2017, what was the mean age of babies with such issues when the ankylossia (tongue-tie) procedure was performed?

The mean age of babies less than one year old who had a coded frenulotomy performed in 2017 was 5 weeks