

Freedom of Information Request	FOI 22-613	1 <sup>st</sup> February 2023
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Thank you for your further request for information under the Freedom of Information Act, received on 20<sup>th</sup> December 2022, reference number FOI 22-613. Please accept our apologies for the delay, I can confirm that the Health Board has completed a search of its records and has established that it does hold some information in relation to your request below:

**1. Between January 1 2022 and November 30 2022, how many referrals to specialist/secondary care outpatient teams from GPs have been rejected by your health board?**

17,414

**2. How many referral rejections were made in 2019?**

17,960

**3. Which three outpatient services have seen the highest number of referral rejections?**

Please find below the breakdown of referral rejections for the period 2019 to 2022

<b>Department</b>
Ophthalmology
Cardiology
Neurology

**4. What observations would you make about the statistics you have provided?**

Numbers for ophthalmology are high due to the referral route being the only access for primary care to send information, therefore a large number of referrals are received for information only e.g every cataract surgery carried out will generate an optometry review which is sent into the Health Board for information and no action is required, this will then appear as a referral that is rejected.

Ophthalmology also have a large number of requests for expediting surgery for patients already within the system. Therefore, the current referral process provides a false impression of the number of actual referrals received and how many subsequently rejected. Electronic referral systems are being established throughout ophthalmology on a national level and the Health Board is fully engaged with this process in order to introduce the systems as soon as they are available and safe to use. This system will help improve the communication lines between primary and secondary care.