NHS
Bolton
NHS Foundation Trust

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

REF: 2026-63
Subject: Cellular Pathology Activity, Backlog, Workforce Capacity & Digital Pathology Infrastructure

Dear Sir/Madam,

Thank you for your email dated **22nd January 2026** where you requested information about **Cellular Pathology Activity, Backlog, Workforce Capacity & Digital Pathology Infrastructure.**

The information you requested is below.

Question	Answer
1. Case Volumes & Activity	
1. Total number of Cellular Pathology cases processed:	
• In the most recent completed financial year	21,929
• Year-to-date for the current financial year	16,476
2. Average monthly case volume.	1,806
2. Current Backlog & Turnaround Times	
1. Current number of unreported cases, broken down by:	
• Routine	0
• Urgent / cancer	0
2. Backlog volume by sub-specialty (e.g. GI, Gynaecological, Breast, Skin, Urology, etc.)	0
3. Average turnaround times (TATs) for:	
• Routine cases	6.97 days
• Urgent / cancer cases	4.6 days
4. Highest backlog volume recorded in the past 12 months.	82
3. Backlog Management Measures	
Please confirm which of the following measures are currently used to manage reporting backlogs (and specify where applicable):	
• Consultant overtime / internal insourcing	N/A

• Use of locum consultant pathologists	N/A
• Outsourcing to external reporting providers	N/A
• Digital pathology / remote reporting	N/A
• Other measures (please specify)	Backlogs only generated when unprecedented levels of annual leave/sickness. These quickly resolve on the return of staff. If there is an extended period of backlogs then this work is picked up by existing team on a PULL system with no additional payments.
4. Outsourcing & Locum Spend (Last 3 Financial Years)	
4A. Outsourced Reporting	
For each of the last three financial years, please provide:	
1. Total spend on outsourced pathology reporting.	£0.00
2. Number of cases outsourced.	N/A
3. Names of external reporting providers used.	N/A
4. Whether service level agreements (SLAs) are in place and, if so:	N/A
• Agreed turnaround times	N/A
• Any performance measures or penalties (if applicable)	N/A
4B. Locum & Agency Spend	
1. Total spend on locum consultant pathologists.	N/A
2. Names of agencies used.	N/A
3. Average duration of locum engagements.	N/A
5. Digital Pathology Infrastructure	
1. Whether digital pathology is currently used for primary diagnosis (Yes/No).	No
2. If yes:	
• Manufacturer and model of whole-slide scanners in use	N/A
• Year digital pathology reporting commenced	N/A

• Whether remote reporting is enabled	N/A
3. Current Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS).	Clinisys Winpath Enterprise
4. Approximate percentage of cases currently reported digitally.	0
6. Workforce Capacity	
1. Current establishment (WTE) of:	
• Substantive consultant pathologists	6.7
• Biomedical Scientists / Advanced Practitioners	11.1
2. Number of additional consultants and BMS staff required to operate at full service capacity.	0
3. Sub-specialties where staffing shortages are most acute.	N/A
7. Future Planning	
1. Whether the Trust has a documented strategy or business case for:	
• Expanding digital pathology	Yes
• Increasing remote reporting capability	No
• Reducing backlogs through external or hybrid support models	No
2. Indicative timelines for implementation within the next 12–24 months (if available).	18 months
8. Relevant Contacts & Engagement	
1. Please provide the name, job title, and work contact details (email address and telephone number) for the following roles:	
• Laboratory Manager / Head of Cellular Pathology	Tracy Eastland, Laboratory Manager tracy.eastland@boltonft.nhs.uk
• Lead Consultant Pathologist	Dr Patrick Waugh patrick.waugh@boltonft.nhs.uk
• Clinical Director for Pathology or Diagnostics	Carolyn Williams carolyn.williams@boltonft.nhs.uk
2. Please confirm whether the Trust would be open to a conversation regarding potential solutions to support:	
• Backlog reduction	Yes
• Workforce capacity constraints	Yes

• Digital pathology or remote reporting initiatives	Yes
3. If so, please confirm the most appropriate individual or department to contact for such discussions.	Tracy Eastland, Laboratory Manager tracy.eastland@boltonft.nhs.uk
9. Cancer Pathway Performance	
1. Please confirm whether the Trust has breached national cancer waiting time targets (e.g. the 62-day cancer pathway) due to Cellular Pathology reporting delays within the last 12 months.	No
2. If yes, please provide the number of cases affected (where available).	N/A
10. Glass Slide Handling	
1. Whether physical glass slides are currently transported off-site for external reporting (Yes/No).	No
2. If yes:	
• Approximate monthly volume of cases	N/A
• Method of transport (e.g. courier, internal transfer)	N/A
11. Consultant Reporting Capacity	
1. Whether current consultant pathologists are reporting at full programmed activity capacity (Yes/No).	Yes
2. If no, please outline the main limiting factors (e.g. job planning constraints, SPA commitments, management duties).	N/A
12. Governance & Access Constraints	
1. Please confirm whether there are any governance, IT, or information governance restrictions that limit the use of:	Yes
• External reporters	Yes
• Remote digital pathology reporting	Yes

2. If yes, please outline the nature of these restrictions.	Require SLAs and DPIAs to be in place; limited availability of IT team for project initialization
13. Backlog Mitigation Models Used	
1. Please confirm which of the following backlog mitigation models the Trust has utilised within the last 12 months:	
• On-site agency locum consultant pathologists	N/A
• Off-site outsourced reporting (digital and/or glass slides)	N/A
• Hybrid models (combination of on-site and off-site support)	N/A
2. Where more than one model has been used, please confirm whether:	
• One model has been used more frequently than the others, or	N/A
• Usage has been broadly equivalent.	N/A
3. Please confirm whether any internal policy, guidance, or procurement preference exists regarding:	
• On-site agency locums versus	No
• Outsourced / off-site reporting solutions.	No

If you have any queries or concerns please do not hesitate to contact the Freedom of Information Department. It would be helpful to quote the above reference number in any future communication.

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 The Chief Executive, Bolton NHS Foundation Trust, The Royal Bolton Hospital, Minerva Road, Farnworth, Bolton. BL4 0JR.

If you are not content with the outcome of your complaint you may apply directly to the Information Commissioner. Generally the Information Commissioner cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted the complaints procedure provided by Bolton NHS Foundation Trust. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at The Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire. SK9 5AF.

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Yours sincerely,

Information Governance Department

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transforming lives...for a better Bolton

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