

16 August 2024

REFERENCE: FOI24\89

Dear Madam,

Thank you for your request for information dated 22nd July 2024 and detailed below:

Under Freedom of Information legislation please provide the description of the various types of post mortem carried out in Northern Ireland in particular in respect of forensic such as partial, full etc and the criteria for each type.

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 gives you two rights of access when you write to us asking for information. You have the right to know whether we hold recorded information falling in scope of your request, and you have the right to receive this recorded information subject to cost limit or exemption.

In relation to the information you have requested, please be advised that the State Pathologist's Department only carry out Coronial post mortems, when requested by the Coroner, in cases of sudden, suspicious and unnatural deaths. All adult post mortems are performed by a consultant forensic pathologist in the Northern Ireland Regional Forensic Mortuary (NIRFM).

Cases are generally classified as suspicious by the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) prior to submission of the body to the NIRFM. During the autopsy the consultant forensic pathologist may also elevate a case to suspicious.

Currently the types of post mortems completed in NIRFM are: suspicious/forensic, full, and non - or minimally invasive.

The type of post mortem, will be at the discretion of the consultant forensic pathologist, in consultation with the Coroner, to determine the extent of the examination required in each case.

The Belfast Health and Social Care Trust (BHSCT) carry out consented post-mortem examinations. You may wish to make an FOI request to the BHSCT Public Liaison Team to establish the processes they have in place.

Public Liaison
Belfast HSC Trust
1st Floor, Nore Villa
Knockbracken Healthcare Park
Belfast
BT8 8BH.

If you are unhappy with the result of your request for information you may request an internal review within two calendar months of the date of this letter. If you request an internal review, please do so in writing stating the reasons to the address above.

If following an internal review, you were to remain dissatisfied you may make a complaint to the Information Commissioner and ask the Commissioner to investigate whether the DOJ has complied with the terms of the FOIA. You can write to the Information Commissioner at:

Information Commissioner
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

The Commissioner will not investigate a complaint unless an internal review procedure has been carried out.

Further details on the role of the Information Commissioner and the handling of appeals can be found at: www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk

Yours sincerely

DoJ Records & Information Manager