

**Reference:** FOI.ICB-2526/328

**Subject:** IBS Services, Referrals, Workforce and Patient Safety

*I can confirm that the ICB does hold some of the information requested; please see responses below:*

QUESTION	RESPONSE
<p>I am writing to request the following information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 regarding the assessment, referral, commissioning, and management of patients with suspected or diagnosed Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS) within your Integrated Care Board (ICB) area.</p> <p>Please provide the information outlined below for each of the last five financial years, unless otherwise stated.</p>	
<p>1. IBS Patient Referrals</p> <p>a. The number of patients diagnosed with IBS who were referred to gastroenterology services.</p> <p>b. The number of patients diagnosed with IBS who were referred to dietetic services.</p>	<p>The ICB does not hold this information.</p> <p>We advise you to contact the providers, Bristol NHS Group, directly:</p> <p>North Bristol NHS Trust (NBT) - <a href="mailto:FOIArequests@nbt.nhs.uk">FOIArequests@nbt.nhs.uk</a></p> <p>University Hospitals Bristol and Weston NHS Foundation Trust (UHBW) - <a href="mailto:FreedomOfInfo@uhbw.nhs.uk">FreedomOfInfo@uhbw.nhs.uk</a></p>
<p>2. GP Workforce, Training, and Clinical Guidance</p> <p>a. The number of GPs currently employed or contracted within your ICB who have additional training, accreditation, or a declared special interest in gut health, gastroenterology, or IBS.</p>	<p>a. The ICB does not hold this information, this would be held by individual practices.</p> <p>b. Details of guidelines, diagnostic criteria, and clinical pathways followed by GPs when assessing patients with suspected IBS including guidance, resources, full description of local pathways, required investigations, red-flags and exclusions are all detailed here <a href="#">Irritable Bowel Syndrome (Remedy BNSSG ICB)</a></p>

<p>b. The guidelines, diagnostic criteria, and clinical pathways followed by GPs when assessing patients with suspected IBS (e.g., NICE guidance, local pathways, required investigations, and red-flag exclusions).</p>	
<p>3. Referral Pathways and Waiting Lists</p> <p>a. The process for referring an IBS patient to a gastroenterologist.</p> <p>b. The current number of IBS patients on the gastroenterology waiting list and the average current waiting time for a first appointment.</p> <p>c. The process for referring an IBS patient to a dietitian.</p> <p>d. The current number of IBS patients on the dietetic waiting list and the average current waiting time for a first appointment.</p>	<p>a. All referral information is available here <a href="#">Irritable Bowel Syndrome (Remedy BNSSG ICB)</a></p> <p>b. Please refer to question 1 response.</p> <p>c. For the process of referring a patient to dietetic services please see here, <a href="https://remedy.bnssg.icb.nhs.uk/adults/dietetics-nutrition/local-services/">https://remedy.bnssg.icb.nhs.uk/adults/dietetics-nutrition/local-services/</a> that describe the referral pathways and criteria for community and secondary care services. For Community (Sirona) see also <a href="#">Sirona Care &amp; Health - Nutrition and Dietetics Referral Pathway for Adults within BNSSG</a>. For Secondary care see also (NBT) <a href="#">NBT Dietetic Service Referral Criteria</a> and (UHBW) <a href="#">UHBW Adult Nutrition &amp; Dietetic Service referral criteria</a>. Dietetics &amp; Nutrition Advice and Guidance services are also available to GPs and provided by NBT and Sirona – see here <a href="#">Dietetics &amp; Nutrition A&amp;G Service (Remedy BNSSG ICB)</a></p> <p>d. To ascertain the number of specifically IBS patients on dietetic waiting lists the requester would need to contact the services directly, who will be better places to disaggregate their lists to IBS patients. For community services contact Sirona Care and Health at <a href="#">Contact Sirona - Sirona care &amp; health</a> For secondary care services contact NBT <a href="mailto:FOIArequests@nbt.nhs.uk">FOIArequests@nbt.nhs.uk</a> and UHBW <a href="mailto:FreedomOfInfo@uhbw.nhs.uk">FreedomOfInfo@uhbw.nhs.uk</a></p>

<p>4. Patient Complaints and Diagnostic Safety (Past 5 Years)</p> <p>Please provide the number of complaints received relating to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Incorrect or inappropriate advice given by a GP to a patient with IBS.</li> <li>b. Misdiagnosis involving IBS (including IBS misdiagnosed as another condition, or another condition misdiagnosed as IBS).</li> <li>c. The steps taken by the ICB over the last five years to improve the quality of IBS diagnosis, referral accuracy, GP advice, and patient safety.</li> </ul>	<p>a and b. Zero complaints received in regards to IBS diagnosis/miss-diagnosis for this period of time.</p> <p>c. Please refer to the BNSSG IBS referral pathway and joint formulary on Remedy: <a href="#">Irritable Bowel Syndrome (Remedy BNSSG ICB)</a></p>
<p>5. Commissioning, Oversight, and Quality Improvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Does the ICB commission any specialist IBS clinics, multidisciplinary gut health services, or community-based IBS programmes? If so, please describe these services.</li> <li>b. Has the ICB identified any service gaps for IBS care in its commissioning assessments or needs analyses?</li> <li>c. Does the ICB audit GP adherence to NICE IBS guidelines? If so, please provide details of the most recent audits.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Yes. BNSSG ICB commission a GPwER led Community Gastroenterology Clinic based at North Bristol Community Diagnostics Centre. The clinic is run by experienced GPwERs and sees patients with a range of gastroenterology problems where the diagnosis is unclear and/or the GP seeks additional management advice. This clinic covers a range of conditions, including Irritable Bowel Syndrome. For further information, including details of the referral pathway, pre-referral requirements and inclusion/exclusion criteria see <a href="#">Community Gastroenterology Clinic - InHealth (Remedy BNSSG ICB)</a> Specialist services are available in secondary care on advice of another service or if other referral routes are not appropriate or not acceptable to the patient.</li> <li>b. Not specifically service gaps, but it is recognised that more patients could be managed in the community without the need for secondary care referrals. The provision of Advice and</li> </ul>

<p>d. Has the ICB conducted any ICS-wide reviews of IBS diagnostic practices in the last five years?</p> <p>e. Does the ICB provide or commission any digital tools, online self-management resources, or mobile applications for IBS care?</p>	<p>Guidance and the Community Gastroenterology Clinic support general practice with this.</p> <p>c. No</p> <p>d. No</p> <p>e. The ICB does not hold this information. This is managed at a practice level. The ICB does however direct GPs to lifestyle advice for patients on Remedy; <a href="#">Irritable Bowel Syndrome (Remedy BNSSG ICB)</a>, see also <a href="#">British Dietetic Association (BDA) website Food Fact Sheet</a></p>
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***The information provided in this response is accurate as of 8 January 2026 and has been approved for release by David Jarrett, Chief Delivery Officer for NHS Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire ICB.***