

Freedom of Information Request

Ref: 23-104

9 March 2023

By Email

Dear Sir/Madam

Thank you for your request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. The Trust's response is as follows:

- We can confirm that we do hold the information you are requesting

The medical director is a trained interventional cardiologist with some experience of primary angioplasty. Why is he not on the on call rota for heart attacks at the Bristol Heart Institute?

Whoever is in the role of medical director at University Hospitals Bristol and Weston NHS Foundation Trust (UHBW), must have a clinical background but does not undertake clinical activity as part of their role and responsibilities.

The medical director has written in 2022/23 to the Royal United Hospital in Bath threatening to withdraw emergency 24/7 heart attack treatment for patients who live around Bath - please can this letter be shared.

We do hold this information, but have decided to withhold this information under Section 36(2) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Please see attached the Record of the Qualified Person's Opinion.

The qualified person's reasonable opinion is that, if the information requested were disclosed, the prejudice/inhibition specified in the following section(s) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 will apply:

Section 36(2) of the Freedom of Information Act states:

'Information to which this section applies is exempt information if in the reasonable opinion of a qualified person disclosure of the information under this Act ...

(b) would, or would be likely to, inhibit—

(i) the free and frank provision of advice, or

*(ii) the free and frank exchange of views for the purposes of deliberation,
or*

(c) would otherwise prejudice, or would be likely to prejudice, the effective conduct of public affairs.'

University Hospitals Bristol and Weston NHS Foundation Trust are fully committed to the provision of emergency 24/7 heart attack treatment for all patients within its regional footprint, including those from Royal United Hospitals Bath (RUH). There is a formal service level agreement (SLA) in place with a number of organisations, which includes UHBW and RUH, to provide this service. Current discussions seek to ensure all parties are fulfilling their responsibilities regarding this agreement, including RUH Bath. We are therefore withholding this correspondence at this point in time as disclosure may undermine these SLA discussions.

Public Interest Test in favour of disclosure

There is a public interest in disclosing information to facilitate accountability and transparency of public authorities for decisions taken by them and to allow individuals to understand decisions made by public authorities affecting their lives and, in some cases, assist individuals in challenging those decisions.

Disclosure would promote transparency and accountability.

Public Interest Test against disclosure

The impact of disclosure would likely inhibit the free and frank exchange of advice with the ongoing discussions regarding collaborative working.

It would inhibit free and frank exchange of views for ongoing live discussions and the ability to debate current issues without external interference and distraction.

A safe space is required to debate live issues and reach decisions away from external interference and distraction to debate live issues and disclosure would prejudice the ability to offer an effective public service.

This concludes our response. We trust that you find this helpful, but please do not hesitate to contact us directly if we can be of any further assistance.

If, after that, you are dissatisfied with the handling of your request, you have the right to ask for an internal review. Internal review requests should be submitted within two months of the date of receipt of the response to your original letter and should be addressed to:

Data Protection Officer
University Hospitals Bristol and Weston NHS Foundation Trust
Trust Headquarters
Marlborough Street
Bristol
BS1 3NU

Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF.

Publication

Please note that this letter and the information included/attached will be published on our website as part of the Trust's Freedom of Information Publication Log. This is because information disclosed in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act is disclosed to the public, not just to the individual making the request. We will remove any personal information (such as your name, email and so on) from any information we make public to protect your personal information.

To view the Freedom of Information Act in full please click [here](#).

Yours sincerely

Freedom of Information Team
University Hospitals Bristol and Weston NHS Foundation Trust