

**Freedom of Information Request**

**Ref: 23-471**

30 June 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 hold some of the information you are requesting

**1. Since 2018 until now, how many complaints have you had about potential excessive exposure to Nitrous Oxide via Entonox and prolonged exposure of staff to high levels of nitrous oxide? Please provide these figures broken down year-by-year eg. 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023 so far.**

Zero

**2. Have you ever suspended the use of Entonox or any other inhaled as an inhalation analgesic for women in labour in either hospital setting or at home births? If so, please state how many times per year its use has been suspended since the first suspension was recorded.**

We have never suspended use overall.

**3. On average, how long has the use of Entonox been suspended for?**

Not applicable

**4. Have you currently suspended or removed Entonox as an inhalation analgesic for women in Labour in either hospital setting or at home births, or are you planning to in the future?**

No

**5. Do you have ventilation/scavenger units to remove Entonox in your maternity unit? If yes, how old are the ventilation/scavenger systems on the maternity wards and when they last updated/repared?**

There are 2 simplex Anaesthetic Gas Scavenging System (AGSS) plants that service Central Delivery Suit (roof). On one plant the pump was refurbished 2017, and a new pump was installed in 2010 on the other plant.

**6. On average, how much exposure do maternity staff have to Entonox in a week and how often do you monitor the levels?**

Please note, the Trust does not hold the data in a format that would enable us to fully respond to your request to the level of detail required and a manual trawl for this information would significantly exceed the 18 hours limit set down by the FOI as the reasonable limit. Section 12 of the FOIA provides that we are not obliged to spend in excess of 18 hours in any sixty-day period locating, retrieving and identifying information in order to deal with a request for information and therefore we are withholding this information at this time.

**7. Have you had any staff who have been exposed to Entonox in excess of the Workplace Exposure Limit (WEL) of 100ppm (eight-hour time weighted average) under COSHH Regulations 2002, and what were the levels of exposure?**

We are currently re-monitoring as it was discovered following recent monitoring that staff were swapping monitors to other staff when leaving for breaks meaning personal exposure levels were incorrect

**8. Is there currently any legal action involving your staff in relation to this?**

No current legal action

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**