

Freedom of Information Request

Ref: 23-964

29 December 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

Excluding reports on investigations into self-harming, disruptive and/or aggressive behaviour, patient abuse, pressure sores and falls, please provide me with summaries of all serious incident reports completed in 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023 which meet the following criteria:

1. Report relates to an incident in one of the following departments:

- acute internal medicine
- anaesthetics
- Medicine

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.

2. Report includes at least one of the following words or phrases:

- physician associate
- anaesthesia associate
- assistant practitioner
- physician assistant
- anaesthetic assistant
- PA
- AA

We have very few staff members in the organisation who carry these titles hence any information shared would be from a very small cohort. We have not provided the information in the requested format as we have considered that there is the potential for the individuals to be

identified, when considered with other information that may be in the public domain. In our view disclosure of information would breach the Data Protection Act. Therefore please find that Section 40 (2) exemption contained within the Freedom of Information Act 2000 is engaged. Section 40 is the exemption for personal information.

Please ensure your summaries include the following information:

- **Date of incident;**
- **A description of the incident including the the job titles of staff involved;**
- **Problems and root causes identified during investigation (be specific about staffing issues, e.g. if short staffed explain what staff roles were on shift, or if an error occurred state the job titles of the individuals who were involved in this error);**
- **Actions (be specific, if staff require further training, state which staff, e.g. 'FY2 doctors' or 'physician associates')**

You may wish to use optical character recognition to quickly identify reports including the above words/phrases. This can be done in seconds using, for example, Adobe PDF OCR software.

In the unlikely event that a large number of your SI reports within this timeframe contain these words or phrases, please simply supply me with summaries of the ten most serious reports which meet this criteria. Use your Trust's own criteria to grade seriousness, e.g. never events and unexplained or unexpected deaths will likely be most serious, followed by incidents causing severe harm, then moderate harm etc. It is therefore not acceptable to employ S12 in response to my request.

Please redact sensitive third party information. Please note that the level of clinical patient information I am requesting is equal to that which your Trust routinely publishes in its board papers, performance reports and quality accounts. It follows that neither S40(2), S40(3) nor S41 apply to my request.

What I am requesting is that you contextualise the level of patient-specific information your Trust already publishes with the actions you take to keep patients safe, along with the actions of your clinical staff.

While staff will be anonymised, it is not acceptable to redact job titles of those involved in the incidents. These reports are about finding systeming failings, and correcting them, not about assigning blame to any individual. To redact staff job titles risks obfuscating potential systemic issues that could harm patients. There is also no expectation of anonymity on the part of staff here, as these summaries are routinely discussed at public board meetings.

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