

Freedom of Information Request

Ref: UHB 20-244

2 June 2020

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:

1. How many complaints through the patient advice and liaison system (PALS) your Trust received from patients alleging they had been discriminated against or badly treated by a member of staff because of their being overweight or obese

*Please do this by searching for complaints containing any of the words "weight", "fat", "obese", "overweight" and "bariatric" and filtering these to find those that refer to fat-shaming comments made by a member of staff.*

The Trust has a combined Complaints and PALS service, called the Patient Support & Complaints Team. A search of complaints received by the team between 01/01/2019 and 31/12/2019 with the words shown above in the description identified a total of two complaints.

2. Can you select the first five such complaints from 2019 and provide me with the following details:
  - a. What type of staff member was the complaint levelled against? E.g. healthcare assistant, junior doctor, consultant, cleaner, kitchen staff

Complaint 1: Junior Doctor

Complaint 2: Student Dentist

- b. Please quote the words allegedly used by the hospital staff or summarise the offending action

Complaint 1 – parent advised their child was “overweight” during a medical examination in the emergency department

Complaint 2 – patient asked “do you weigh over 23 stone?” following an

assessment.

- c. Please tell me what, if any, action was taken by your trust in response to these five sample complaints from the beginning of 2019

Complaint 1 – along with a senior colleague, the junior doctor reflected on the events in length and their future practice going forward. The doctor apologised to the parent for the upset caused, and specifically for raising concerns about the child's weight during an assessment that took place in ED, during the early hours of the morning. They agreed this wasn't the right time or place, but it was concluded that the medical assessment was thorough and as expected of a clinician working in the department.

Complaint 2 – the student dentist apologised for raising the question and discussing this with a colleague in an open space. It was agreed this wasn't reflective of the Trust's values and should have been done more discretely. The patient was informed why the question was asked about their weight, due to a weight limit on the dental chairs, and the possible harm it could have caused them if they didn't review this before treatment.

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:

Director of Corporate Governance  
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

**FOI Team**  
**UH Bristol and Weston NHS Foundation Trust**