

**Freedom of Information Request**

**Ref: 20-578**

20 January 2021

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

**1. What is the rate of nosocomial COVID infection in your trust?**

The Trust formally reports all COVID-19 positive test results to Public Health England at all stages of the patients admission. This data is published and available in the public domain. This is a notifiable disease.

We are able to obtain this information however we have decided to apply Section 21 of the FOIA as this information is reasonably accessible in the public domain on the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/statistical-work-areas/covid-19-hospital-activity/>

Section 21 of the FOIA provides that we are not obliged to provide the requested information is already reasonably accessible and therefore we are withholding this information at this time.

**2. Can you confirm that you have protocols in place so that patients with confirmed COVID are kept separate from those with uncertain COVID diagnoses (amber wards) and those who are COVID negative (elective surgery, with a test beforehand).**

There are clear Trust processes that manage patients as 'green, amber or blue' accordingly.

**3. On wards housing patients with an uncertain COVID status (amber) what protocols do you have in place to move people once they become confirmed COVID cases? How quickly is this done after the positive test result?**

Elective patients are screened prior to admission for COVID-19. Emergency patients admitted to hospital are screened for COVID-19 promptly and moved into an amber pathway. Once the COVID-19 test result is obtained then the patient is moved in a green or blue pathway depending on the result. This actioned promptly within hours of the result.

**4. Can you confirm that there has never been a case where you have housed a patient who has already received a confirmed positive COVID test on the same ward as patients who are in hospital for elective surgery and who are COVID negative?**

Wards receiving patients for elective surgery are green and only take differentiated green,

COVID-19 negative patients.

**5. What are your procedures for informing families about nosocomial COVID infections? And at what point do you tell people that their relative has i. been exposed to COVID ii. has suspected COVID, or iii. has confirmed COVID?**

The COVID-19 diagnosis will be discussed with the patients next of kin. The time scale will depend on individual patient scenario's. There is a leaflet available. Further advice is available through the NHS website.

**6. Given that families may contain several vulnerable people, how do you balance patient confidentiality against those people's right to make informed decisions about their level of exposure to COVID, particularly when they are caregivers? Clear channels of communication on this matter are clearly important to ensuring that vulnerable people who are offering care to the exposed/diagnosed party can take precautions against infection and/or are made aware of their own exposure, particularly in the event that the person with the COVID infection refuses to consent to sharing this information.**

COVID-19 advice is available through the NHS which includes symptoms, testing and tracing and self-isolation. Access is available to testing if symptomatic and therefore follow up with Track and Trace if clinically indicated.

**7. What measures do you have in place to ensure that those patients who are exposed to COVID in hospital but who test negative do not spread the virus into the community? It is common knowledge that a single negative COVID test does not prove non-infection, since someone can test negative in the early stages of infection. (This is why quarantine periods have been set at 14 days). In particular, what precautions do you take to ensure that people do not carry COVID into the care system?**

Patients information leaflets are available. Patients will be advised from the time of their diagnosis if tested COVID-19 positive to self-isolate for the prerequisite period of time. The COVID-19 status of the patient is shared with care facilities. Patients who are COVID-19 negative will have an additional COVID-19, 24 hours prior to transfer to a care facility.

**8. What communication and transport measures do you have in place to ensure that clinically vulnerable people are not asked to collect patients who have been exposed to COVID from hospital, putting their health at risk?**

The Trust use a number of ambulance providers who have specific infection control guidance that they use. This may include encouraging patients to wear a face mask whilst in the ambulance. The COVID-19 status of the patient being discharged will be shared with the ambulance provider. The Trust does not prescribe how the ambulance providers manage or organise the allocation of patients.

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

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