

Freedom of Information Request

Ref: 21-397

2 August 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

Could you please tell me between January 1st 2021 and the date of this email (21st July 2020):

1) How many PALS enquiries and official complaints your Trust has received from patients concerned about

The Trust has an integrated PALS and complaints service, the Patient Support and Complaints Team. All responses therefore cover both types of complaint/enquiry. In order to answer this request, I have used all of the search terms suggested below, along with 'cancer diagnosis' and 'radiotherapy'. I have also reviewed every complaint received for Bristol Haematology & Oncology Centre for the period stated.

a) the impact of the coronavirus pandemic and your Trust's response on their or their family member's access to cancer treatment

During the period 01/01/2021 to 21/07/2021, the Trust received a total of eight complaints relating to delays with cancer appointments and/or treatment. However, only two of these even mentioned Covid, One complainant stated that he was worried about the delay as he had heard about cancer treatments being delayed due to Covid and the second was concerned that he needed a Covid vaccine before he could start his treatment.

b) and access to cancer testing - including tests to find out whether their or their family member's cancer has spread, returned or occurred for the first time.

NOTE: I suggest you search for these complaints by using the keywords 'cancer treatment', 'chemotherapy', 'cancer testing', 'coronavirus', 'COVID-19' and other relevant terms.

During the same period, the Trust did not receive any complaints regarding access to cancer testing.

2) For the five most recent PALS enquiries/official complaints received, please provide me with

a) a summary of the complaint (e.g. a patient with stage 4 lung and breast cancer has contacted PALS to complain about their chemotherapy being postponed for a month)

1. Complaint received on 09/04/2021 - still hadn't received an appointment to see the consultant.
2. Complaint received on 10/06/2021 - Patient very worried that he has not received an appointment to see the consultant
3. Complaint received on 11/06/2021 - Patient's daughter is very concerned about several delayed appointments
4. Complaint received on 01/07/2021 - Patient is awaiting an updated schedule of her chemotherapy treatment
5. Complaint received on 12/07/2021 – Patient not yet received an appointment

b) the exact wording of the complaint, with redactions to remove potentially identifying information

We do not publish this level of information so have provided a summary.

1. My mother was told by her GP on Monday 22 March she has cancer across her abdomen and in her liver. The GP made a fast-track referral to Southmead hospital following the diagnosis. She was told she should hear from the hospital the week of 22 March. We're now coming to the end of the third week since she was given the diagnosis and she has not had any contact about an appointment with a consultant.
2. I have been trying to get hold of someone to find out what is going on with my prostate cancer treatment. I am overdue by quite a bit with an appointment concerning this,
3. Mum got diagnosed with Stomach cancer and had her stomach removed. She has not had an appointment since and now the cancer has come back and they say she has to have a CT scan, which then got cancelled and hour before the appointment.
4. I wish to register a complaint about the unavailability of the BHOC Appointments Team.
5. My Doctor has referred me to the 2 week urgent referrals but I have heard nothing from you.

c) What action the Trust took in response

Outcomes/action taken in the same order as number in (a) and (b) above:

1. Patient was originally referred to Southmead Hospital and had her diagnostic scans there so

there was some confusion as her consultant appointment was then made for BHOc. Appointment has now been made and patient and her daughter happy this has been resolved.

2. Patient has now seen consultant, who apologised for the delay and reassured the patient that the delay should not have affected him or his treatment but that he would report the delay in any case.

3. Currently awaiting consent and approval of complaint report/issues to be investigated.

4. Appointment schedule has now been arranged and a manager has spoken to the patient to apologise. Awaiting follow up on what actions the manager is taking in respect of the ongoing issue with BHOc appointment team's telephones not being answered.

5. Apologised to patient and request sent to manager of service to contact patient as a matter of urgency to arrange appointment.

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**