

**Freedom of Information Request**

**Ref: 21-484**

5 October 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

I would be grateful if I could be provided with your prostate cancer management protocols. I would also be grateful for any information relating to the SpaceOAR hydrogel product, its approval for use and safety.

SpaceOAR was placed on the risk register (January 2020) due to possible lack of continuation of funding:

SpaceOAR Hydrogel is a product being evaluated through the NHE Innovation Fund. In radical radiotherapy for patients with prostate cancer, there has always been an accepted consequence of short term rectal toxicity because of the close proximity of the prostate and rectum. SpaceOAR Hydrogel is a product that be inserted between the two organs to move them apart and can allow a reduction in the dose to the rectum. The Hydrogel is self absorbed over a period of months following radiotherapy treatment and has no side effects in itself. UH Bristol has received about 40 products in the last year from the Innovation Fund and CCG have paid for the insertion costs.

It is expected that the Innovation Funded products will cease and a policy decision will be made about future commissioning. The Trust requests that the current arrangement for reimbursement of the insertion costs continues until the Innovation Funded products are stopped.

The Trust has strict eligibility criteria for the use of SpaceOAR Hydrogel as it does not have the theatre resource to use the product on all patients receiving prostate radiotherapy.

If the commissioner funding to cover the cost of the insertion of SpaceOAR Hydrogel is not continued while Innovation Funded products are available, then a cohort of patients will experience increased rectal toxicity as a result of their radical radiotherapy.

A tangential consequence would be that UH Bristol would not be contributing to the evaluation of this product.

Patient selection criteria are rigorously applied in the discussions with individual patients during the consent process. Only the patients most likely to receive benefit are offered treatment with SpaceOAR Hydrogel

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**