

Freedom of Information Request

Ref: 22-010

10 January 2022

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 am a birth and postnatal doula. I was wondering if you could help me. Would you be able to send me the evidence used to make the decision to once again take birthing women's rights away to have 2 birthing partners or more? It feels like we're going backwards not forwards in supporting the rights of birthing women.

I completely understand the pressures you are under regarding staff shortage, lack funding as I previously worked as a health professional in the NHS.

But in this country we are allowed to go to pubs, restaurants, nightclubs etc with 100's of people and yet a birthing woman appears to have no rights! As well as homebirths being taken away as an option, they now have this situation. Surely as midwives and birth workers we should be standing up for these women's rights!

I fully supported the Midwife March last year as I really value midwives and the care they give. But I don't understand when you are so short staffed you want to take away the help and support a doula or other relative can have for a woman and yourselves I would really appreciate seeing the evidence used to make this decision so that I can try and explain it to my clients.

Adhering to national NHS guidelines we have carried out risk assessments across our maternity wards, clinical and waiting areas to ensure our services are safe for pregnant women, their baby, birth partners, and our staff caring for them. We are constantly reviewing these arrangements. The wellbeing and choice of pregnant women lies at the heart of our decision-making. We understand the arrangements in place during the Coronavirus pandemic may be upsetting at times for those women who are affected. Our dedicated team are on hand to give additional support to women and partners whenever it is needed.

Each hospital is different in how its wards and waiting areas are configured and consequently the arrangements will change accordingly.

It is important that we protect staff and patients from omicron transmission as much as possible. In addition, the home birth service in Bristol has not stopped. UHBW midwives

continue to support choice and facilitate home birth if that is the woman's choice.

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