

**Freedom of Information Request**

**Ref: 24-206**

25 March 2024

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) In several physician associates (PAs) have erroneously prescribed medications to patients. If this has happened at your trust, please provide the following information:**

**a) The earliest and latest date a prescription was made by a physician associate?**

Not applicable

**b) The total number of physician associates who have made unauthorised prescriptions?**

Zero

**c) The total number of prescriptions made by PAs that have been acted on, i.e. patients given medication?**

Zero

**d) The total number of prescription requests made by PAs that were not acted on, i.e. patients not given medications?**

Zero

**e) Please list all controlled medications and cytotoxic drugs prescribed by physician associates, and the total number of occasions on which they were prescribed?**

Zero

**f) Please give the number of patients who came to harm as a result of PAs making any unauthorised prescriptions?**

Zero

**g) Please explain how it was possible for PAs to prescribe medication at your trust (e.g.**

**PAs accidentally given prescribing functionality)?**

Not applicable

**h) What steps have you taken to rectify this issue, including any penalties for the physician associates involved?**

Not applicable

**2) Several trusts have reported situations in which their physician associates (PAs) have erroneously ordered ionising radiation. If this has happened at your trust, please provide the following information:**

**a) Total number of incidents in which PAs made requests for ionising radiation?**

Please note: Where the figures are between 1 and 5, this has been denoted by \*. Due to the low numbers, we have considered that there is the potential for individuals to be identified from the information provided, when considered with other information that may also be in the public domain. In our view disclosure of these low figures would breach one of the Data Protection Principles set out in Schedule 1 of the Data Protection Act, namely Principle 1. The Trust therefore finds that the Section 40(2) exemption contained within the Freedom of information Act 2000 is engaged. This follows NHS Digital (formerly HSCIC) analysis guidance (2014) which states that small numbers within local authorities, wards, postcode districts, providers and Trusts may allow identification of patients and should not be published.

**b) Total number of incidents in which PAs made requests for ionising radiation, and these requests were acted on (i.e. the patient received the scan with ionising radiation as requested by the PA)?**

Please note: Where the figures are between 1 and 5, this has been denoted by \*. Due to the low numbers, we have considered that there is the potential for individuals to be identified from the information provided, when considered with other information that may also be in the public domain. In our view disclosure of these low figures would breach one of the Data Protection Principles set out in Schedule 1 of the Data Protection Act, namely Principle 1. The Trust therefore finds that the Section 40(2) exemption contained within the Freedom of information Act 2000 is engaged. This follows NHS Digital (formerly HSCIC) analysis guidance (2014) which states that small numbers within local authorities, wards, postcode districts, providers and Trusts may allow identification of patients and should not be published.

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:

Data Protection Officer  
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**