

## **Freedom of Information Request**

**Ref: 25-115**

17 February 2025

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 hold some of the information you are requesting

**I'm writing under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to request information about the rate of sodium nitrite poisoning in your hospital trust. Please note I am asking about sodium nitrite, not sodium nitrate.**

**For the past five years, up to and including 6 February 2025, I'd like to know the following:**

**1. How many cases of sodium nitrite poisoning were there? Please break this down into cases of a) intentional poisoning (eg suicide) and b) unintentional poisoning.**

<b>Years</b>	<b>Accidental</b>	<b>Intentional</b>
7 Feb 20 to 6 Feb 2021	0	0
7 Feb 21 to 6 Feb 2022	0	0
7 Feb 22 to 6 Feb 2023	*	*
7 Feb 23 to 6 Feb 2024	*	*
7 Feb 24 to 6 Feb 2025	0	*

*Please note: This is all discharged admissions between the listed dates where the patient was coded with 'T50.6 - Poisoning: Antidotes and chelating agents, not elsewhere classified'. These figures will include sodium nitrite poisoning but may also include other substances. Admissions were counted as Accidental if they had the code 'X44- Accidental poisoning by and exposure to other and unspecified drugs, medicaments and biological substances' and Intentional if they had the code 'X64- Intentional self-poisoning by and exposure to other and*

*unspecified drugs, medicaments and biological substances'. If a patient was admitted multiple times with this coding they will be counted multiple times.*

Further to 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local authorities, wards, postcode districts, providers and Trusts may allow identification of patients and should not be published.

**A. Of the cases of sodium nitrite poisoning, how many of them were administered Methylene Blue?**

We are unable to provide this information; our coding system cannot separate administration of Methylene Blue from other substances.

**2. How many deaths were there where sodium nitrite poisoning was listed as the, or a, cause of death? Please break this down into how many deaths were caused by a) intentional poisoning (eg suicide) and b) unintentional poisoning.**

We do not hold this information.

**A. Of the deaths caused by sodium nitrite poisoning, how many of them were administered Methylene Blue?**

We do not hold this information.

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**