



Ref: FOIA Reference 2020/21-455

Date: 25<sup>th</sup> January 2021

Email [foi@uhnm.nhs.uk](mailto:foi@uhnm.nhs.uk)

Dear

I am writing in response to your email dated 14<sup>th</sup> January 2021 (received into our office 15<sup>th</sup> January 2021) requesting information under the Freedom of Information Act (2000) regarding handling of whistleblowing concerns during Covid -19 pandemic.

As of 1<sup>st</sup> November 2014 University Hospitals of North Midlands NHS Trust (UHM) manages two hospital sites – Royal Stoke University Hospital, and County Hospital (Stafford). Therefore the response below is for the two sites combined from that date where appropriate.

**Q1 Handling of whistleblowing concerns during**

**1. Please provide the total number of whistleblowing concerns received between 01/03/2019 and 31/08/2019 by University Hospitals of North Midlands**

A1 The request is for the term whistleblowing, we do not use this term. We record the following information, which includes the number of speaking up cases recorded on the speaking up case tracker maintained by the Trust Freedom to Speak up Guardian. This includes contacts made to a Freedom to Speak up Guardian, or those received in the Chief Executive's Office, a trust department or via Care Quality Commission that have been alerted to the Guardian for recording on the tracker: for the time frame requested there were 22 concerns raised

We record separately contacts made to our Employee Support Advisors, who act as speaking up champions. Information on speaking up contacts made to Freedom to Speak Up Guardians and Champions are available on the National Guardians Office website.

**Q2 Please provide the total number of whistleblowing concerns received by University Hospitals of North Midlands between 01/03/2020 and 31/08/2020**

A2 The request is for the term whistleblowing, we do not use this term. We record the following information, which includes the number of speaking up cases recorded on the speaking up case tracker maintained by the Trust Freedom to Speak up Guardian. This includes contacts made to a Freedom to Speak up Guardian, or those received in the Chief Executive's Office, a trust department or via Care Quality Commission that have been alerted to the Guardian for recording on the tracker: for the time frame requested there were 43 concerns raised

We record separately contacts made to our Employee Support Advisors, who act as speaking up champions. Information on speaking up contacts made to Freedom to Speak up Guardians and Champions are available on the National Guardians Office website. Our Trust Board papers provide a brief overview of issues raised and themes. Our Trust Board papers provide a brief overview of issues raised and themes.

**Q3 Please provide the following information for each whistleblowing concern received by University Hospitals of North Midlands between 01/03/2020 and 31/08/2020:**

- a. A brief summary of the whistleblowing concern.
- b. Whether any action was taken following the concern, and if so, a brief description of the action taken.
- c. If the person provided the information anonymously (i.e. they did not provide you with their name and/or contact details) please indicate this.

A3 See below:

Points (a) and (b) - I can confirm that the Trust holds information regarding 'A brief summary of the whistleblowing concern' and whether any action was taken, but feel this information is exempt under section 36(b) of the FOI Act : *inhibit the free and frank provision of advice or exchange of views*. The Trust has determined whether disclosure of this information would have a detrimental effect, as defined by the section 36 exemption and has refused this request on the grounds that it could prejudice the effective conduct of public affairs and inhibit free and frank discussion within the Trust going forward.

However, some summary information is published in Freedom to Speak up Reports which can be located in the Trust Board Papers published on the Trust website, found at the following link: <https://www.uhnm.nhs.uk/about-us/our-board/trust-board-papers/>

c) Number of anonymous contacts: six for the time frame requested

\*Please note that any individuals identified do not give consent for their personal data to be processed for the purposes of direct marketing.

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An anonymised copy of this request can be found on the Trust's disclosure log, please note that all requests can be found at the following link: <http://www.uhnm.nhs.uk/aboutus/Statutory-Policies-and-Procedures/Pages/Freedom-of-Information-Disclosure-Log.aspx>

This letter confirms the completion of this request. A log of this request and a copy of this letter will be held by the Trust.

If you have any queries related to the response provided please in the first instance contact my office.

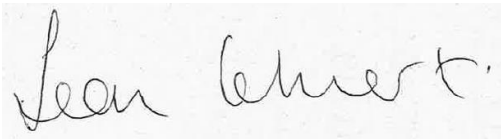
Should you have a complaint about the response or the handling of your request, please also contact my office to request a review of this. If having exhausted the Trust's FOIA complaints process you are still not satisfied, you are entitled to approach the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) and request an assessment of the manner in which the Trust has managed your request.

The Information Commissioner may be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF or via [www.ico.org.uk](http://www.ico.org.uk).

If following review of the responses I can be of any further assistance please contact my secretary on 01782 671612.

Yours,



Jean Lehnert  
**Data, Security & Protection Manager**