

Ref: FOIA Reference 2021/22-493

Royal Stoke University Hospital
Data, Security and Protection
Newcastle Road
Stoke-on-Trent
Staffordshire
ST4 6QG

Date: 24th January 2022

Email foi@uhnm.nhs.uk

Dear

I am writing to acknowledge receipt of your email dated 29th December 2021 (sent to our communications team) requesting information under the Freedom of Information Act (2000) regarding Covid 19.

Note: all FOI requests should be sent to foi@uhnm.nhs.uk

As of 1st November 2014 University Hospitals of North Midlands NHS Trust (UHNM) 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 I'm requesting under the Freedom of Information Act the supply of the SARS-COV-2 deaths of patients in the Trust with other underlying illnesses,

A1 I can neither confirm nor deny whether the information you have requested is held by the Trust in its entirety. This is because the information requested in your question is not held centrally, but may be recorded in individual health/death records. In order to confirm whether this information is held we would therefore have to individually access all individual health/death records within the Trust and extract the information where it is present. We therefore estimate that complying with your request is exempt under section 12 of the FOI Act: *cost of compliance is excessive*. The section 12 exemption applies when it is estimated a request will take in excess of 18 hours to complete. We estimate that accessing and reviewing all individual health/death records and then extracting relevant information would take longer than the 18 hours allowed for. In addition to the section 12 exemption the Trust is also applying section 14 (1) exemption: *oppressive burden on the authority*

Section 12 exemption as detailed above, Note:

1. You have asked for the number of deaths at UHNM as a result of COVID19 only i.e. no co-morbidities.
2. We are able to provide the number of deaths of patients who have had COVID19 listed as a cause of death on their death certificate i.e. with co-morbidities. This information is available and we follow the reporting criteria mandated by NHS Digital as we are required to submit this information and it is publicly available (at the links below). We are counting COVID-19 deaths as per the national guidance. The figure, and a description of the definition we are using, are published daily and can be found via the links below:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/causesofdeath>
<https://coronavirus.data.gov.uk/>
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/conditionsanddiseases/articles/coronaviruscovid19/latestinsights>

As part of our due diligence in determining whether the Section 12 exemption was appropriate, we took one patient at random and identified multiple contributing factors as to why the patient passed away (in the example we reviewed there were 8). It would require a clinician to review the paper medical record, (which in the majority of cases have been archived to off-site storage), and such a review may not be able to definitively determine a single cause of death. Taking this example as a base line (the length of time to identify the record and review - approx. 2 minutes) and multiplying that by the 3600 patients concerned (as at 17 January 2022) would take in excess of 35 hours, which is far in excess of the 18 hours listed in the FOI legislation as a reasonable amount of time for one person to collate the data.

Q2 Also the SARS-COV-2 deaths with no other health issues from 20th March 2020 to 30th September 2021. To include the age ranges in both categories.

A2 I can confirm that the Trust holds information regarding this question, but feel this information is exempt under section 21: *information reasonably accessible by other means*. This is because the information is available via the Trust's public website at the following link: FOI reference's 460-2122, 480-2122 (December 2021). Also note that UHNM has been answering FOI requests regarding Covid-19 throughout the pandemic and you will find all our responses at the following link

<http://www.uhnm.nhs.uk/about-us/regulatory-information/freedom-of-information-publication-scheme/freedom-of-information-disclosure-log/>

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

UHNM NHS Trust is a public sector body and governed by EU law. FOI requestors should note that any new Trust requirements over the EU threshold will be subject to these regulations and will be advertised for open competition accordingly.

Where the Trust owns the copyright in information provided, you may re-use the information in line with the conditions set out in the Open Government Licence v3 which is available at <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3/>. Where information was created by third parties, you should contact them directly for permission to re-use the information.

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.

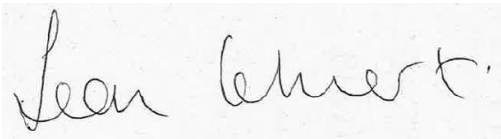
Should you have a complaint about the response or the handling of your request, please also contact my office to request a review of this. If having exhausted the Trust's FOIA complaints process you are still not satisfied, you are entitled to approach the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) and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

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