Ref: FOIA Reference 2024/25-471

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

Date: 30th October 2024

Email foi@uhnm.nhs.uk

Dear Sir/ Madam

I am writing to acknowledge receipt of your email dated 15th October 2024 requesting information under the Freedom of Information Act (2000) regarding Waitlist Validation

On 21st October 2024 we contacted you via email with the following:
Please clarify the following:

Q4 waitlist validation is a continuous process which does not end., please clarify what you mean here
Q6/7/8/9 -linking which data to what? Please clarify

On 22nd October 2024 you replied via email with:
'*Thank you for your quick response. Regarding the waitlist validation process, what I am trying to understand is in the last 12 months, how long has the waitlist validation process taken i.e. how many hours has been spent on the process by staff?*

Regarding "data linkage", I mean the process in which patient data across the NHS Trust is linked and also how patient data is linked across the other systems e.g. community care, primary care, social care etc. '

Q1   I am conducting some research on waitlist validation and data linkage in the NHS. I am particularly interested in the different techniques and solutions used for these purposes.

I was hoping you'd be able to answer the following question under the Freedom of Information Act:

How is waitlist validation carried out in your Trusts? Please select one of the following options: Manually / Semi-automated / Automated.
a.   If your response was semi-automated or automated, which tools do you use? Please specify the types of tools or software used.

A1   Semi-automated. Palantir's CCS, MBI's Luna National Data Quality Dashboard, Bespoke digital solution for patient validation, telephone calls.

Q2   How many FTEs currently work on waitlist validation and what band are they? Please specify the number per band.

A2   4.0 FTEs corporately (1 band 5 and 3 band 4s), but multiple Divisional staff also do validation as part of their role. Hours spent on validation are not measured.

Q3   How has your FTE count working on waitlist validation increased in the past 2-3 years? Please provide an estimate if you do not have the exact number.

A3   Corporately – 4.0 FTEs on a temporary basis 2022/23-2023/24.
~4.0 band 4s divisionally still in post, but funded by temporary source

Q4   In the past 12 months, approximately how long has the waitlist validation process taken? Please provide an estimate if you do not have the exact number.

A4   As per your above clarification:12k hours corporately, divisional validators don't just validate this would be impossible to even estimate the hours, therefore this information is not held.

Q5   What data quality issues have been identified the most frequently as part of the waitlist validation process? Please select those that apply from the list below:
        a.   Decision to admit but no waiting list entry
        b.   Missing waiting list or pathway information (e.g. due date, intended procedure)
        c.   Patients on an admitted waiting list without an active RTT (Referral to Treatment Pathway) clock
        d.   Past TCI (To Come In) dates
        e.   Potential duplicates
        f.   Other - please specify

A5   C, E and pathways with no start code

Q6   What are your current approaches to linking data? Please select one of the following options: Manually or semi-automated / Automated

A6   As per your clarification: Semi-automated

Q7   What is the proportion of data linkage that is manual and automated? Please provide an estimate if you do not have the exact number.
        a.   If automated, what tools are used? Please provide the name of the tools.
        b.   If manual, what tools are used e.g. R, data bricks? Please provide the name of the tools.

A7   Patient data held in Trust systems is linked by iPortal system, between clinical documentation and PAS data. All other data inside and outside of Trust is manually linked, usually via Vlookup between excel spreadsheets generated by PowerBI.

Q8   Currently, is the data linking process cumbersome? Please select one option: Yes/No

A8   Yes

Q9   And does it take away from people's everyday role? Please select one option: Yes/No

A9   Yes

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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.

Yours,

Leah Carlisle
Head of Data, Security & Protection and Health Records
Data Protection Officer