



Ref: FOIA Reference 2023/24-415

Date: 23rd November 2023

Email foi@uhnm.nhs.uk

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Dear

I am writing to acknowledge receipt of your email dated 28th September 2023 requesting information under the Freedom of Information Act (2000) regarding policy.

On 10th October 2023 we contacted you via email as in order to continue with your request we require clarification on the following:

Whether you are referring to Learning disabilities? Or disabilities as a whole?

On 12th October you replied via email with the following:

'To clarify, my request pertains to "disabilities as a whole" in line with the definition provided by the Equality Act 2010. This includes, but is not limited to, physical disabilities, sensory impairments, learning disabilities, mental health conditions, and long-term health conditions. My interest is in understanding the comprehensive approach the Trust takes to ensure equitable healthcare access for all patients with disabilities, not just those with learning disabilities.'

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 am writing to make a formal request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 regarding any policy and procedures related to the identification and implementation of reasonable adjustments for patients with disabilities, in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

The Equality Act 2010 imposes a legal duty on organisations, including healthcare providers, to make reasonable adjustments to their services to ensure that they are accessible to individuals with disabilities, and on par with services provided to individuals without disabilities. It has come to my attention that you utilise the Reasonable Adjustment Flag on the National Care Records Service (NCRS) to record, share, and view details of reasonable adjustments for patients across the NHS in England. I am interested in understanding how you implement and adhere to this policy to ensure equitable healthcare access for patients with disabilities.

Therefore, I kindly request the following information:

A copy of your policy or guidelines regarding the identification and implementation of reasonable adjustments for patients under the Equality Act 2010.

A1 The Trust has no policy or Standard Operating Procedure, therefore this Information is not held

Q2 Information on the processes and procedures in place for health and care workers within your organisation to record and communicate reasonable adjustments for patients, including the use of the Reasonable Adjustment Flag on the NCRS.

A2 For patients with a Learning Disability or Autism Trust staff receive E- Learning training which specifies to contact the Vulnerable Patient team to add an alert to the electronic patient record which outlines the need for reasonable adjustments. Within inpatient ward documentation there is a vulnerable patient checklist which instructs staff to contact the vulnerable patient team if the patient has a learning disability or autism so an alert can be added to the patient electronic patient record.

There is an Accessibility alert which can be added where is it identified that a patient has communication support needs. Cards and posters are displayed to encourage patients and visitors to highlight communication support needs so an alert can be added to their patient record.

Q3 Details about the categories of adjustments and types of adjustments that can be recorded for patients on the Reasonable Adjustment Flag, as specified in the NHS guidance.

A3 Any reasonable adjustment can be added to the patient record. Staff are guided but not limited too by things such as, offering double appointments, start of day or end of day appointments, having a carer with them outside of visiting times or facilitating the use of a side room or quiet area.

Accessibility Alert can be added to include:

Font 14, 16, 20

Black text on yellow paper

Hearing impairment (free text to provide additional details such as BSL interpreter required).

Easy Read

Foreign Language Interpreter

Q4 Any documents or guidelines that you provide to your staff regarding the assessment and recording of patients' needs for reasonable adjustments, including communication requirements and impairments.

A4 Through training and inductions staff are taught about the use of Health Passports, Child Wellbeing Passports and 'This is me' dementia passports which outline communication needs and impairments and what would help the patient. See, Policy G23 Accessible Communication and Information Policy

- Q5 Information on how you ensure that reasonable adjustments are applied promptly and consistently across all care settings within the hospital.**
- A5 This is not monitored, therefore this Information is not held
- Q6 Any data or statistics related to the number of patients within your organisation who have been flagged as needing reasonable adjustments, and the types of adjustments commonly provided.**
- A6 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 this question is not held centrally, but may be recorded in health records. In order to confirm whether this information is held we would therefore have to individually access all health 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 health 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*
- Q7 Information on how you comply with the legal obligation under the Equality Act 2010 to make anticipatory reasonable adjustments, particularly in cases where patients are referred or present for care.**
- A7 Reasonable adjustments are made on a patient by patient basis if Trust is informed by the referrer or patient or Carer or before they attend or on attendance. (However there are review processes LeDeR, section 42 Safeguarding Enquiries which would identify if reasonable adjustments were made or not made)
- Q8 Any additional documentation, reports, or guidance related to your efforts to satisfy your legal obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and NHS contracts.**
- A8 Task and finish group set up with Patient experience and Matron for Outpatients to look at reasonable adjustments- Checklists used attached
- Q9 Details on any training or education provided to staff within your organisation regarding reasonable adjustments for patients with disabilities.**
- A9 All patient facing staff receive mandatory training on Learning disability, Autism, Dementia and Mental health all of which make reference to reasonable adjustments.
- Q10 The contact information of the designated individual or department responsible for overseeing the implementation of reasonable adjustments within your organisation.**
- A10 There is no one person or department responsible for overseeing the implementation of reasonable adjustments.

*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.

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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.

Yours,



Rachel Montinaro
Data Security and Protection Manager - Records