



Ref: FOIA Reference 2022/23-378

Date: 15<sup>th</sup> December 2022

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

Dear

I am writing to acknowledge receipt of your email dated 10<sup>th</sup> October 2022 requesting information under the Freedom of Information Act (2000) regarding Long Covid

As of 1<sup>st</sup> 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 Under the Freedom of Information Act, I would like to request the following information on the number of staff impacted by Long Covid working in your Trust.**

**Could you state the number of staff members who were recorded to have had Long Covid while working for your Trust at any time in the period between October 2021 - October 2022?**

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 this question is not held centrally, but may be recorded in individual health records. In order to confirm whether this information is held we would therefore have to individually access all individual 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 individual 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*

Under section 16 of the FOI Act we are required to provide requestors with advice and assistance where possible. We would therefore like to advise you that your request is shortened to just question 3 we are able to comply within the 18 hour time frame. In order to avoid delay to your response we have provided this below

**Q2 Could you state all leave of absences taken where Long Covid was cited as the cause between October 2021 - October 2022 and the length of time each absence lasted for.**

A2 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 individual health records. In order to confirm whether this information is held we would therefore have to individually access all individual 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 individual 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*

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**Q3 Does your Trust offer any specialised support for staff members living with Long Covid? If so could you please provide details of these services?**

A3 This would be via occupational health involvement and recommendations

\*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](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,



Leah Carlisle  
**Head of Data, Security & Protection/ Data Protection Officer**