

Ref: FOIA Reference 2020/21-158

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

Date: 4<sup>th</sup> September 2020

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

Dear

I am writing in response to your email dated 31<sup>st</sup> July 2020 requesting information under the Freedom of Information Act (2000) regarding cancer complaints during COVID pandemic

On our acknowledgment we added the following statement:

**The University Hospitals of North Midlands Trust is committed to the Freedom of Information Act 2000.**

**However, the NHS is facing unprecedented challenges relating to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic at the current time. Understandably, our resources have been diverted to support our front-line colleagues who are working tremendously hard to provide care for our patients, and to those in need of our services.**

**We strive to be transparent and to work with an open culture. But at this time, whilst care of our patients and the safety of our staff takes precedent, it is likely that responses to some requests for information will be delayed. We apologise for this position in advance, and will endeavour to provide you with as much information as we can, as soon as we are able.**

**The Information Commissioners Office has recognised the current situation in the NHS.**

On 4<sup>th</sup> August 2020 we contacted you via email as we required clarification on what you meant by "other relevant terms"?

On 24<sup>th</sup> August 2020 you replied via email with the following instruction:

*"Thanks for writing for clarification. Please ignore the highlighted phrase. Looking forward to receiving the information"*

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 Could you please tell me between 1<sup>st</sup> March 2020 and the date of this email (31<sup>st</sup> July 2020):**

**1) How many PALS enquiries and official complaints your Trust has received from patients concerned about:**

a) The impact of the coronavirus pandemic and your Trust's response on their access to cancer treatment

b) Access to cancer testing - including tests to find out whether their cancer has spread, returned or occurred for the first time

**NOTE: I suggest you search for these complaints by using the keywords 'cancer treatment', 'chemotherapy', 'cancer testing', 'coronavirus', 'COVID-19' and other relevant terms.**

A1 There have been no PALS complaints and no official complaints sent directly to the Complaints Team

**Q2 For the five most recent PALS enquiries/official complaints received, please provide me with:**

a) A summary of the complaint (e.g. a patient with stage 4 lung and breast cancer has contacted PALS to complain about their chemotherapy being indefinitely suspended)

b) The exact wording of the complaint, with redactions to remove potentially identifying information

c) What action the Trust took in response

A2 As answer 1

\*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,



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