Ref: FOIA Reference 2019/20-170

Date: 9th July 2019

Dear

I am writing in response to your email dated 26th June 2019 requesting information under the Freedom of Information Act (2000) regarding use of Intelligent Automation (IA) – RPA (Robotic Process Automation).

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   Does your organization presently use and/or endorse a RPA/IA (*description of this detailed above)* **to automate manual, rule-based processes?**

If the answer is NO –

1.1   Is RPA/IA something that the organisation would consider (within the next 2 years) as a way of supporting reduced human resource capacity & to improve repeatable business outcomes?

1.2   If the organisation is not considering RPA technology – is there a reason why this is not being considered?

- **Perceived expense**

- **Concerns about how existing administrative staff would accept this**

- **This is the first time we have heard about RPA/ IA**

- **Other reason (please feel free to comment)**

1.3   If the answer is YES – RPA/IA is currently being used in the organisation - could you please detail –

1.3.1   The system type/name/supplier

1.3.2   What it is used for (or has been used for) and by what department, examples below

- **Outpatient Services**

- **Data Migration**

- **Improving Referral to Treatment (RTT) processes**

- **Onboarding / Off-Boarding staff**

- **Back office / Finance related process automations**

- **Other (please comment) –**

1.3.3 How did the existing human workforce react to tasks being replaced by automation?

- **Good, they welcome the changes**

- **Bad, they felt threatened**

- **Indifferent**

- **Not sure – no feedback**

- **Other – please comment**

1.3 4 When did your RPA/ IA system come into use and when does the contract expire?

1.3.5 How much does this new technology cost the organisation & if applicable, how many robots are employed?

1.3.6   Has there been any analysis of the system, (&/or case studies) to demonstrate any benefits so far- either operationally, financially or as regards patient safety/management?

A1   Please see below:

1.1 Is RPA/IA something that the organisation would consider (within the next 2 years) as a way of supporting reduced human resource capacity & to improve repeatable business outcomes?	Not applicable
1.2 If the organisation is **not** considering RPA technology – is there a reason why this is not being considered?	Not applicable
• Perceived expense • Concerns about how existing administrative staff would accept this • This is the first time we have heard about RPA/ IA • Other reason (please feel free to comment)	Not applicable
1.3 If the answer is **YES** – RPA/IA is **currently being used** in the organisation - could you please detail –	See below
1.3.1 The system type/name/supplier	Blue Prism supplied by Vanad Enovation
1.3.2 What it is used for (or has been used for) and by what department, examples below	Copying information attached to a patients referral in the e-referral system so this can be attached to the patient in our Trust's patient portal which is then accessed by clinicians at the point of seeing the patient in clinic

- Outpatient Services - Data Migration - Improving Referral to Treatment (RTT) processes - Onboarding / Off-Boarding staff - Back office / Finance related process automations - Other (please comment) –	See above
1.3.3 How did the existing human workforce react to tasks being replaced by automation?	See below
- Good, they welcome the changes - Bad, they felt threatened - Indifferent - Not sure – no feedback - Other – please comment	This gave time back to complete other tasks
1.3 4 When did your RPA/ IA system come into use and when does the contract expire?	This came into use in June 2018, we have a rolling annual maintenance contract with the supplier
1.3.5 How much does this new technology cost the organisation & if applicable, how many robots are employed?	We have an annual maintenance contract with the supplier. We are currently using 4 robots with a further 4 robots available as back up.
1.3.6 Has there been any analysis of the system, (&/or case studies) to demonstrate any benefits so far- operationally, financially or as regards patient safety/management?	Information not held.

Q2 **Who is the main person(s)/ decision maker (s) or team – who would probably be responsible (or is responsible) for the decision to use RPA/IA in your organization? - Name/title/ contact details.**

A2 There is no one person.

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

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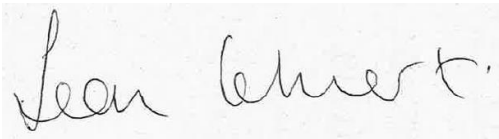
Should you have a complaint about the response or the handling of your request, please also contact my office to request a review of this. If having exhausted the Trust's FOIA complaints process you are still not satisfied, you are entitled to approach the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) and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

If following review of the responses I can be of any further assistance please contact my secretary on 01782 676474.

Yours,

Jean Lehnert
Information Governance Manager