



Ref: FOIA Reference 2019/20-705

Date: 2nd April 2020

Email foi@uhn.nhs.uk

Dear

I am writing in response to your email dated 6th March 2020 requesting information under the Freedom of Information Act (2000) regarding ablation policies.

On 23rd March 2020 we contacted you via email with 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.

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 you under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to request the following information regarding the local policy and protocols at University Hospital of North Midlands governing the provision of left atrial ablation for paroxysmal and persistent atrial fibrillation.

1. Please describe what written guidelines / protocols and governance procedures are currently in place at University Hospital North of Midlands for the management of AF ablation treatment? Please attach a copy of University Hospital North Midlands' written protocol for the management of AF ablation treatments.

A1 Please see below:

- At UHNM we have a day-case AF ablation protocol
- AF ablation outcomes are audited

- We have an AF specialist nurse that routinely assess patients for obstructive sleep apnoea, refers to cardiac rehab as well as management of all other aspects of AF care pre AF ablation

Q2 Please confirm the inclusion and exclusion criteria that University Hospital North Midlands follows for patients with:

- a. Paroxysmal and Persistent AF**
- b. Paroxysmal AF only**
- c. Persistent AF only**

A2 Please see below:

Paroxysmal and Persistent AF –

- Patients with symptomatic AF who has failed/intolerant antiarrhythmics therapy
- LA size not severe
- No contraindications to ablation/anticoagulation

Paroxysmal AF only

- Patients with symptomatic AF who has failed/intolerant antiarrhythmics therapy
- LA size not severe
- Patients personal choice to prefer AF ablation as first-line therapy
- No contraindications to ablation/anticoagulation

Persistent AF only

- Patients with symptomatic AF who has failed/intolerant antiarrhythmics therapy
- LA size not severe
- No contraindications to ablation/anticoagulation

Q3 Please confirm the decision making process governing ‘redo’ / repeat procedures.

A3 Please see below:

- Patients symptomatic of their Afib and has failed/intolerant antiarrhythmic therapy
- Early recurrence of Afib
- Patients preferences weighing pros & cons of Afib ablation/medical therapies
- Patients unlikely to be offer more than three Afib ablation procedures
- LA size not severe
- No contraindications to ablation/anticoagulation

Q4 Please confirm what written patient information is offered to patients undergoing AF ablation procedures and attach a copy.

A4 Please find the below attached:

- Arrhythmia Alliance/ AF Association – Ablation for atrial fibrillation (AF)
- British Heart Foundation – *I’m in control of my Atrial fibrillation*
- Link to our Facebook AF support group
<https://www.facebook.com/AFSUPPORTNETWORK/>
- A copy of clinic letter detailing the discussion for AF ablation
- Recently produced patient information sheet for AF ablation

*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.

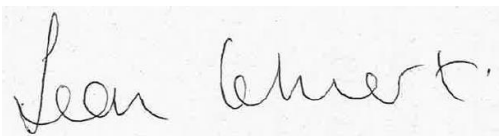
Should you have a complaint about the response or the handling of your request, please also contact my office to request a review of this. If having exhausted the Trust's FOIA complaints process you are still not satisfied, you are entitled to approach the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) and 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 671612.

Yours,



Jean Lehnert
Data, Security & Protection Manager