



Ref: FOIA Reference 2024/25-500

Date: 30th October 2024

Email foi@uhnm.nhs.uk

Dear Sir/ Madam

I am writing to acknowledge receipt of your email dated 24th October 2024 requesting information under the Freedom of Information Act (2000) Birthrights

Q1 This is a request under the Freedom of Information Act (2000). Please provide the following information to help us understand the scale of restrictions to the rights of women and birthing people to choose their place of birth across the UK, as we campaign for improvements in maternity care for all women and birthing people.

Does your Trust operate a home birth service for women and birthing people (regardless of whether such services are offered through a dedicated team or integrated into wider maternity services)?

A1 Homebirth was offered to all women and birthing people who booked from April 2024. From those bookings, the Trust have supported homebirths taking place from October 2024

Q2 If so, are home birth services available 24 hours a day, seven days a week across the whole geographic area overseen by the Trust?

A2 Homebirth services are offered 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Out of working hours, an on call service supports homebirth whereby 2-3 midwives are on call from home.

Q3 Has your Trust been able to provide home birth services to women and birthing people 24 hours a day, seven days a week without any suspensions or restrictions to that ability in the last 12 months? Please note in using the terms suspensions or restrictions we include (but are not limited o) restrictions to the days/times when home births can be attended by midwives or not being able to offer a home birth service at all for a period of time. We do not include unforeseen staff shortages on a particular shift here.

A3 Homebirths booked from April 2024 have been due from October 2024. Prior to opening for bookings in April, the homebirth service had been suspended.

Q4 Please include the terms and reason(s) for any suspensions or restrictions in the last 12 months.

- A4 Prior to commencing bookings for homebirth in April 2024, the service was suspended due to staffing. Birthrate plus acuity tool had identified a staffing deficit. Several recruitment events aimed to have UHNM fully staffed by October 2024 in accordance with Birthrate plus.
- Q5 Has your Trust been unable to send midwives to attend a home birth due to unforeseen circumstances (such as staff shortages or sickness) on a particular shift in the last 12 months? Please include how many times this has occurred in the last 12 months.**
- A5 The homebirth service was suspended for 8 hours due to a shortfall in staffing as a result of unplanned sickness.
- Q6 How many home births have been attended by midwives in your Trust in the last 12 months, including those resulting in intrapartum and/or postnatal transfer into hospital and those resulting in a baby being born at home with no transfer-in?**
- A6 We are unable to provide the information you require in the requested format as to release this data could lead to the identification of the person(s) involved due to the low numbers involved and would breach the Trusts obligations under Data Protection Act 2018. Accordingly, this aspect of your request is exempt from disclosure under the terms of Section 40(2) of the FOI Act. *Personal information*. However, as the Trust is committed to openness and transparency we can band the numbers as being <5
This exemption is an absolute exemption and therefore no consideration of the public interest test is needed.

*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.

Yours,



Leah Carlisle
Head of Data, Security & Protection and Health Records
Data Protection Officer