



Ref: FOIA Reference 2019/20-147

Royal Stoke University Hospital
Quality, Safety and Compliance Department
Newcastle Road
Stoke-on-Trent
Staffordshire
ST4 6QG

Date: 19th June 2019

Email foi@uhn.nhs.uk

Dear

I am writing in response to your email dated 14th June 2019 requesting information under the Freedom of Information Act (2000) regarding number of paid suspensions.

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 questions 2, 3 and 4 is not held centrally, but may be recorded in individual personnel records. In order to confirm whether this information is held we would therefore have to individually access all individual personnel 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 personnel 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 if your request is shortened to the questions that we are able to comply within the 18 hour time frame. In order to avoid delay to your response we have provided this below.

On 17th June 2019 we contacted you via email as we required clarification that this request was intended for UHMN as we don't employ personnel at [REDACTED] [REDACTED] (Q4)

On the same day you replied via email with the following:

"Thank you for getting in touch and asking for the clarification so promptly. The two establishments in brackets were simply provided as an example - I should have made this clearer by writing e.g. beforehand! Sorry for the confusion".

As of 1st November 2014 University Hospitals of North Midlands NHS Trust (UHMN) 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 2000, I would like to request the following information:

1) What is the total number of staff currently employed by the Trust?

A1 10729 (Headcount at 30th April 2019)

Q2 How many members of staff were suspended on full pay in the last three years?

Rather than giving a total for the years combined, please specify the number of those suspended on full pay in each:

- 2016
- 2017
- 2018
- 2019 to-date.

A2 Sections 12 and 14 exemptions as detailed above.

Q3 The total cost for each year 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019 to-date spent on paying staff while suspended.

Please break this down into each year rather than a whole total.

A3 Sections 12 and 14 exemptions as detailed above.

Q4 For each incident of suspension, please break down the following:

- The role of the person suspended (Mental health worker, doctor etc.).
- Their years in service.
- Where they were working when suspended ([REDACTED]).
- Circumstances behind the suspension. (Misconduct, inappropriate sexual relationship etc.).
- Date (where appropriate) of the incident which led to suspension.
- The date the individual was suspended from and to.
- How much was paid to the suspended person.
- The outcome of any suspension – both internal and external.
- Did the staff member return to a role following the suspension?

A4 Sections 12 and 14 exemptions as detailed above.

Q5 What was the longest suspension over the three-year period?

A5 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.*

Q6 How much was paid to that employee during that suspension?

A6 We are unable to provide the information you require 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.*

Q7 Please include the employee's role, reason for suspension and outcome of suspension

A7 We are unable to provide the information you require 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.*

Q8 Finally, please include the total number of staff currently suspended on full pay from the Trust.

If you feel you cannot provide this information within the given time limit, please only answer questions 1 – 4 and 8.

A8 We are unable to provide the information you require 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 we are able to confirm that this is less than 5.

*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.

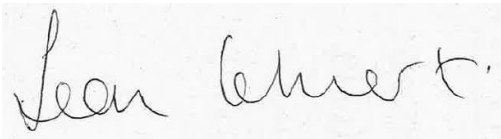
Should you have a complaint about the response or the handling of your request, please also contact my office to request a review of this. If having exhausted the Trust's FOIA complaints process you are still not satisfied, you are entitled to approach the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) and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

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

Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light-colored background. The signature reads "Jean Lehnert" in a cursive script.

Jean Lehnert
Information Governance Manager