

**Royal Stoke University Hospital**

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

Ref: FOIA Reference 2020/21-424

Date: 14<sup>th</sup> January 2021

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

Dear

I am writing in response to your email dated 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2021 sent to Pals team, (received into our office 4<sup>th</sup> January) requesting information under the Freedom of Information Act (2000) regarding Covid-19.

On 4<sup>th</sup> January 2021 we contacted you via email to inform you that the FOI Act sets out a twenty working day timescale for requests to be completed by. We will always try to complete your request within this timeframe. We will let you know whether the Trust holds the information you have requested, and we will contact you as soon as possible if we are delayed in our response for some reason. If we require further information from you or we need you to further explain your request before we can continue to process it we will also contact you.

As we count working days and your request didn't come into our office until 4<sup>th</sup> January 2021 the 20 day end line is 1<sup>st</sup> February 2021 and NOT 29<sup>th</sup> January 2021 as stated in your email.

On 4<sup>th</sup> January 2021 we contacted you via email as we required clarification on Q1; did you mean all patients or just covid-19 ones?

On the same day you replied via email the following:

*"Question 1 is referring to ALL deaths at all your Hospitals (not specifically Covid). Basically irrespective of cause.*

*Question 2 and 3 are specifically linked to cause as per request".*

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 and 3 is not held centrally, but may be recorded in individual health/death records. In order to confirm whether this information is held we would therefore have to individually access all individual health/death 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 health/death 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*

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 Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, please provide me with the following information, as I require this information for a project I am currently undertaking:**

I can see the figures that you publish online, but these are deaths within 28 days of a positive Covid-19 test, so they could have died from other causes.

I just want to know the exact figures between 1<sup>st</sup> February 2020 until the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020 for the following questions:

**Question 1**

**How many people have died in each of your hospitals between 1<sup>st</sup> February 2020 until the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020?**

A1 These are all hospital deaths for the period 1<sup>st</sup> February 2020 until the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020 as per your above clarification.

Total = 2842

**Q2 How many people have died in your hospitals from Covid-19 alone between 1<sup>st</sup> February 2020 until the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020? (As in they died ONLY due to Covid-19 and did not have any comorbidities at the time of death.) with the Data filtered :**

**By Hospital showing deaths per month per hospital between 1<sup>st</sup> February 2020 until the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020.**

A2 Section 12 exemption as detailed above. Note: we are counting COVID-19 deaths as per the national guidance. The figure, and a description of the definition we are using, are published daily and can be found via the link below:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/statistical-work-areas/covid-19-daily-deaths/>

The link to the Trust level data is available in the daily spread sheet in the section titled 'COVID-19 all announced deaths'.

NHS England has the following below:

<https://coronavirus.data.gov.uk/details/deaths>

Please note that we are providing these links under Section 21 of the FOI Act – '*Information reasonably accessible to the applicant via other means*'.

**Q3 How many people have died in your hospitals from Covid-19 between 1<sup>st</sup> February 2020 until the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020? (As in they died due to Covid-19 but they did have comorbidities at the time of their death.) With the Data filtered:**

- **By Hospital showing deaths per month per hospital between 1<sup>st</sup> February 2020 until the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020.**

**I understand that under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 I am entitled to a response within 20 working days of your receipt of this request.**

**I would prefer to receive the information electronically and the Data contained in the form of a Microsoft Excel Workbook would be preferable.**

**If my request is denied in whole or in part, I ask that you justify all deletions and/or omissions by reference to specific exemptions of the act and include the name of the person(s) instructing the information to be omitted as I reserve the right to appeal your decision to withhold any information.**

**If you require any clarification, I expect you to contact me under your section 16 duty to provide advice and assistance if you find any aspect of this Freedom of Information request problematic.**

**Please acknowledge receipt of this request, and I look forward to receiving the information on or before 29<sup>th</sup> January 2021.**

A3 As answer 2

\*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.

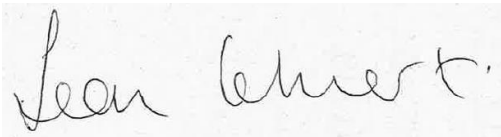
Should you have a complaint about the response or the handling of your request, please also contact my office to request a review of this. If having exhausted the Trust's FOIA complaints process you are still not satisfied, you are entitled to approach the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) and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