



Ref: FOIA Reference 2023/24-498

Date: 21<sup>st</sup> November 2023

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

Dear

I am writing to acknowledge receipt of your email dated 29th October 2023 (received into our office 30th October) requesting information under the Freedom of Information Act (2000) regarding FOI requests.

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 FOI requirements please provide me with the information as requested below.**

**For the fiscal years (i.e. commencing April to end of March following year)**  
**2020/21**  
**2021/22**  
**2022/23**  
**2023/24 to date**

**1 How many FOI request per fiscal year were received by UHNM NHS Trust?**

A1 See below:

2020/21 = 603  
2021/22 = 675  
2022/23 = 757  
2023/24 =as of 30/10/23 = 502

**Q2 How many such requests were refused per fiscal year ?**

A2 As per ICO guidance no requests were *refused* by UHNM- see ICO guidance at the following link. Note that the use of exemptions as allowed by the ICO are used by UHNM either in part or in full, however all requests are responded to.

<https://icosearch.ico.org.uk/s/search.html?collection=ico-meta&query=refusing+a+request&profile=default>

**Q3 How many FOI request were fully responded to within the 20 working days requirement?**

A3 See below: Note that there are many reasons why requests breached the deadline, notably the complexity of the requests, operational pressures/ covid 19 and the amount of data sometimes requested.

2020/21 = 535

2021/22 = 572

2022/23 = 485

2023/24 = 465- note that this figure includes requests paused for clarification (there will also be requests still open that have not yet reached the 20-day working period that are not included in the response data)

**Q4 How many FOI requests denied by UHNM either in part or in total were subject to Information Commissioners Office (ICO) review?**

A4 UHNM have not been subject to an ICO review for the reason of 'denying' a request. For transparency, UHNM underwent an ICO review for breaching section 10(1) of the FOIA: *'Section 10 of FOIA states: 10. — (1) Subject to subsections (2) and (3), a public authority must comply with section 1(1) promptly and in any event not later than the twentieth working day following the date of receipt.'*

**Q5 What were the results of any and all ICO reviews of UHNM denying either in part or in total an FOI request per fiscal year/**

A5 As above

**Q6 What have been per fiscal year UHNMs 7 most reasons for denying an FOI request?**

A6 At UHNM we have the right under the FOI act to refuse a request entirely under the following circumstances:

- It would cost too much or take too much staff time to deal with the request.
- The request is vexatious.
- The request repeats a previous request from the same person.

At UHNM we mostly answer FOI in their entirety or offer partial answers if an exemption is applicable. The exemptions that are commonly used are:

- Section 21 – information already reasonably accessible
- Section 22 – information intended for future publication.
- Section 40(2) – Personal information
- Section 41 – confidentiality
- Section 43 – trade secrets and prejudice to commercial interests

\*Please note that the above list does not cover all exemptions that are applicable under the FOI Act.

For some requests we may provide an answer that states the information is not held by UHNM and where possible we signpost the requester to the third party who do hold that information e.g., another Trust, ICB, supplier.

Additionally, we may also ask the requester to provide proof of identity where it is obvious a Pseudonym has been given, if the requester fails to provide this evidence, then under the ICO guidance we are not obliged to answer.

\*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.***

Where the Trust owns the copyright in information provided, you may re-use the information in line with the conditions set out in the Open Government Licence v3 which is available at <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3/>. Where information was created by third parties, you should contact them directly for permission to re-use the information.

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).

Yours,





University Hospitals  
of North Midlands  
NHS Trust

**Rachel Montinaro**  
Data Security and Protection Manager - Records

