

Ref: FOIA Reference 2019/20-196

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

Date: 22nd July 2019

Email foi@uhnm.nhs.uk

Dear

I am writing in response to your email dated 6th July 2019 (received into our office 8th July) requesting information under the Freedom of Information Act (2000) regarding requirement on Trusts / CCGs to offer alternatives to patients waiting over six months.

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 In the 'NHS Operational Planning and Contracting Guidance 2019/20' there is a new requirement on NHS Trusts and CCGs as follows:

"Patients will continue to have choice at the point of referral and for 2019/20 new local arrangements must be put in place so that anyone who has been waiting for six months or longer must be specifically contacted by the provider on whose waiting list they appear or by the responsible CCG and given the option of faster treatment at an alternative provider."

Please provide the following information:

Is this new requirement included in your patient access policy? Please provide a copy of your current patient access policy.

A1 The Trust is currently updating the Patient Access Policy in consultation with our commissioners and regulators and in accordance with our system wide operational plan to determine how best to optimise this new policy mandate for our patients. Publication expected September 2019. Section 22 exemption: *future publication*.

Q2 Do you record compliance against this new requirement?

A2 Under the current Patient Access Policy the Trust does and will continue to identify groups of patients, who have waited in excess of 18 weeks where viable alternative providers exist and these pathways are documented on our systems.

The updated Patient Access Policy, will have a revised Standard Operating Procedure that will include the specified processes for operational managers to follow in order to comply with contractual obligations around this new policy framework.

Q3 How many patients have been offered faster treatment at an alternative provider in the three months of 2019/20 Quarter 1?

A3 None

Q4 How many patients have accepted a transfer to an alternative provider in the three months of 2019/20 Quarter 1?

A4 None

Q5 What action are you taking to deal with the backlog of referrals over 26 weeks?

A5 The Trust has a dedicated Executive-led Patient Access and Performance meeting. This is further supported by Divisional Access meetings. Discussions relate to (but not exclusive of) patients who have waited over 18 weeks.

The Local Health Economy strategy around elective access for our patients is currently under review and will be concluded in alignment with the new Patient Access Policy documentation (September, 2019)

*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.

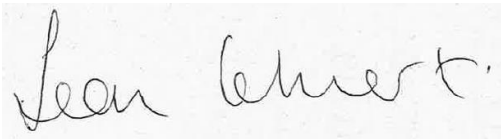
Should you have a complaint about the response or the handling of your request, please also contact my office to request a review of this. If having exhausted the Trust's FOIA complaints process you are still not satisfied, you are entitled to approach the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) and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