



**University Hospitals  
of North Midlands**  
NHS Trust

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

Ref: FOIA Reference 2024/25-302

Date: 19<sup>th</sup> August 2024

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

Dear Sir/ Madam

I am writing to acknowledge receipt of your email dated 7th August 2024 requesting information under the Freedom of Information Act (2000) regarding Chaplaincy Recruitment

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 Having seen your vacancy (Reference number: 205-6250967, Healthcare Chaplain - Roman Catholic Community, University Hospital of North Midlands NHS Trust) advertised on NHS Jobs we are aware that you are currently in the process of recruiting to a Chaplaincy / Spiritual Care post.**

**The Network for Pastoral, Spiritual and Religious Care in Health ([network-health.org.uk](http://network-health.org.uk)) works with the NHS and other Chaplaincy bodies to promote equality and diversity in high quality spiritual care.**

**We have noted that your advertisement has restricted the vacancy on the grounds of religion or belief - one of the characteristics protected in law. The latest NHS Chaplaincy guidelines (published August 2023, see <https://www.england.nhs.uk/chaplaincy/>) do permit such restriction in exceptional circumstances, but also make it clear that posts should only be restricted where there is a genuine occupational requirement to do so. The guidelines state:**

**"Before any recruitment is undertaken, a full Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) should be completed to understand whether a post needs to be restricted. There is generally no need or justification for job descriptions and person specifications to specify that the post holder should be of a certain religion or beliefs, as chaplaincy services should be available to all irrespective of religion or belief. However, after completing a thorough Equality Impact Assessment, it may be decided that someone from a specific religion or belief group is required to do the job (known as an 'occupational requirement')." In order to help us understand the specific circumstances in your organisation that led it to restrict the post, can you please:**

**Send us a copy of your Equality Impact Assessment that identifies and evaluates the requirement to restrict the post on the grounds of religion or belief.**



A1 I can confirm that the Trust holds information regarding this request, but feel this information is exempt under section 21: *information reasonably accessible by other means*. This is because the information is available via the Trust's public website at the following link: January FOI ref 720-2324

<http://www.uhnm.nhs.uk/about-us/regulatory-information/freedom-of-information-publication-scheme/freedom-of-information-disclosure-log/>

**Q2 In the event that no Equality Impact Assessment was completed, can you please state that this is the case.**

A2 As answer 1

Note: The interviews for this part time post were initially held in January 2024 -with no appointment made as an outcome of interview and the same post (reduced hours) was reauthorised in April 2024 for recruitment

\*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:



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Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF or via [www.ico.org.uk](http://www.ico.org.uk).

Yours,

**Rachel Montinaro**

Data Security and Protection Manager - Records