



Ref: FOIA Reference 2021/22-128

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

Date: 4th June 2021

Email foi@uhn.nhs.uk

Dear

I am writing to acknowledge receipt of your email dated 28th May 2021 requesting information under the Freedom of Information Act (2000) regarding Caesarean Section.

The University Hospitals of North Midlands Trust is committed to the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

However, the NHS is facing unprecedented challenges relating to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic at the current time. Understandably, our resources have been diverted to support our front-line colleagues who are working tremendously hard to provide care for our patients, and to those in need of our services.

We strive to be transparent and to work with an open culture. But at this time, whilst care of our patients and the safety of our staff takes precedent, it is likely that responses to some requests for information will be delayed. We apologise for this position in advance, and will endeavour to provide you with as much information as we can, as soon as we are able.

The Information Commissioners Office has recognised the current situation in the NHS

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 Please can you provide me with the following information?

How many maternal request caesareans were carried out in your Trust between April 2019 and April 2020 with no other significant medical, obstetric or psychological indication?

A1 Caesarean section procedures are only conducted at the Royal Stoke site; we currently do not collect data relating to how many maternal request caesareans are conducted

Q2 What were the total number of caesarean sections carried out in your Trust between April 2019 and April 2020?

A2 The total number of caesarean section conducted at Royal Stoke between 1st April 2019 and 31st March 2020 = 2044 (Deliveries, not babies)

Q3 Please confirm how your Trust complies with the revised NICE guideline [NG192] in relation to Maternal Request for Caesarean Birth points 1.2.25 – 1.2.31 – published March 31 2021 <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng192/chapter/Recommendations>

A3 The section referred to the above is copied below from maternal request for caesarean birth published March 2021.

NICE 1.2.25

When a woman with no medical indication for a caesarean birth requests a caesarean birth, explore, discuss and record the specific reasons for the request. **[2011, amended 2021]**

NICE 1.2.26

If a woman requests a caesarean birth, discuss the overall benefits and risks of caesarean birth compared with vaginal birth (see the section on planning mode of birth) and record that this discussion has taken place. **[2011]**

NICE 1.2.27

If a woman requests a caesarean birth, offer discussions with the woman, a senior midwife and/or obstetrician and other members of the team if necessary, for example an anaesthetist, to explore the reasons for the request, and ensure the woman has accurate information. **[2011, amended 2021]**

NICE 1.2.28

If a woman requests a caesarean birth because she has tokophobia or other severe anxiety about childbirth (for example, following abuse or a previous traumatic event), offer referral to a healthcare professional with expertise in providing perinatal mental health support to help with her anxiety. See the NICE guideline on antenatal and postnatal mental health for more detailed advice on providing mental health services for pregnant women. **[2011, amended 2021]**

NICE 1.2.29

Ensure healthcare professionals providing perinatal mental health support to women requesting a caesarean birth have access to the planned place of birth during the antenatal period in order to provide care. **[2011, amended 2021]**

NICE 1.2.30

If a vaginal birth is still not an acceptable option after discussion of the benefits and risks and offer of support (including perinatal mental health support if appropriate; see recommendation 1.2.28), offer a planned caesarean birth for women requesting a caesarean birth. **[2011, amended 2021]**

NICE 1.2.31

If a woman requests a caesarean birth but her current healthcare team are unwilling to offer this, refer the woman to an obstetrician willing to perform a caesarean birth. **[2011, amended 2021]**

University Hospitals of North Midlands Caesarean Section Guideline (2019)

Currently being revised. The following section 'maternal request caesarean section' is copied below from the existing guideline.

Maternal request

Caesarean section (CS) is not routinely offered for maternal request. The reasons behind the request should be fully explored, discussed and documented. Alternative solutions should be explored.

If a woman requests a CS when there is no other indication, discuss the overall risks and benefits of CS compared with vaginal birth and record that this discussion has taken place. Involve in discussion other members of the obstetric team (including the obstetrician, midwife and anaesthetist) if necessary to explore the reasons for the request, and ensure the woman has accurate information.

When a woman requests a CS because she has anxiety about childbirth, offer referral to PEACH service via antenatal clinic for professional psychological support and help to address her anxiety.

For women requesting a CS, if after discussion with two obstetric consultants and offer of support (including perinatal mental health support for women with anxiety about childbirth), a vaginal birth is still not an acceptable option, offer a planned CS.

High BMI (>50) alone is not an indication for planned CS.

Q4 Please can you provide information relating to the following questions?

Do you have an explicitly stated policy not to offer Maternal Request Caesarean Sections (MRCS) in your Trust?

A4 No, we do not you have an explicitly stated policy not to offer Maternal Request Caesarean Sections (MRCS)

Q5 Do you have a written guideline for Maternal Request Caesarean Sections (MRCS) in your Trust? If yes, please provide a copy of the written guideline

A5 We do not have a written guideline specifically for Maternal Request Caesarean Sections (MRCS) in our Trust. However there is a designated section with our current Caesarean Section Guideline. A copy of which is provided.

Q6 Do you require a compulsory mental health appointment in order for a Caesarean Section to be offered?

A6 No, we do not require a compulsory mental health appointment in order for a Caesarean Section to be offered.

Q7 Do you have a policy which states the number of weeks into pregnancy the decision for a Caesarean Section would be made? If yes please state number of weeks

A7 34 weeks gestation

Q8 Are there any other conditions which must be met in order to be offered a Maternal Request Caesarean Section in your Trust? If yes, please provide a copy of the conditions

A8 See comments in Q3 above

*Please note that any individuals identified do not give consent for their personal data to be processed for the purposes of direct marketing.

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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.

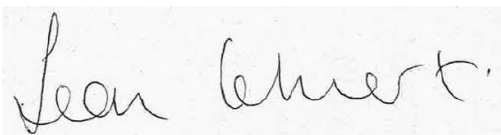
Should you have a complaint about the response or the handling of your request, please also contact my office to request a review of this. If having exhausted the Trust's FOIA complaints process you are still not satisfied, you are entitled to approach the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) and 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 671612.

Yours,



Jean Lehnert
Data, Security & Protection Manager