



**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 2020/21-394

Date: 22nd January 2021

Email foi@uhnm.nhs.uk

Dear

I am writing in response to your email dated 11th December 2020 (received into our office 14th December) requesting information under the Freedom of Information Act (2000) regarding elective operations.

On 14th December 2020 we contacted you via email as we required the following clarification: When you say elective operations scheduled – are you referring to operations going through an operating theatre or any procedure whereby a patient has been added to an elective waiting list?

On 4th January 2021 you replied via email with the following:

“Many thanks for your response to my request. In response to your question on what I meant by elective operations scheduled:

I believe NHS England requires NHS Trusts, including University Hospital of North Midlands NHS Trust, to routinely provide certain data on “elective operations”. I therefore understood when sending my request that there was an established definition of “elective operations” for Trusts to refer to when collecting data.

For reference, the NHS has published guidance on what should be counted when collecting data on elective operations, which is available here:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/statistical-work-areas/cancelled-elective-operations/>

In this guidance, it states:

All planned or elective operations should be counted including day cases. (Patient classification = 1 or 2, Admission method = 11, 12 or 13). As a general guide, include all patients where an OPCS-4 operation code procedure was to be carried out. Do not include minor outpatient procedures. Invasive X-ray procedures carried out on inpatients or day cases should be counted, as an operation and any cancelled procedures should be included for the purpose of monitoring this standard.

If you could follow this guidance when supplying the information I have requested, that would be much appreciated.

I trust this clarifies your question. If you could confirm that this message has been received and that you are now able to continue processing my request, that would be much appreciated.”



We replied to you the same day via email with the following as we required further clarification we stated:

Thank you for your email, however we asked, "When you say elective operations scheduled – are you referring to operations going through an operating theatre or any procedure whereby a patient has been added to an elective waiting list?"

We would be making an assumption as to what you, the requester means, therefore, is it the number of patients who were added to the inpatient waiting list (no matter if they have a date for their procedure or not) or the number of patients who have been given dates to come in and added to the theatres list? It should be noted NHS England does not require Trusts to routinely supply information on "scheduled elective operations".

Please note, there are no definitive criteria for an Elective Scheduled as this is not a recognized NHS standard. We could provide every OPCS procedure recorded however this would include injections and x-rays – is this what you want?

On 6th January 2021 you replied via email with the following:

"If in the data on elective operations available via the link below, "as a general guide", all cases "where an OPCS-4 operation code procedure is to be carried out" are included, I would like this rule to be applied all information I have requested. "Minor outpatient procedures" should not be included in this information, while "invasive X-ray procedures carried out on inpatients or day cases" should be.

<http://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/cancelled-elective-operations/cancelled-ops-data/>

If you could confirm that this message has been received and that you are now able to continue processing my request, that would be much appreciated".

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 question 2 is not held centrally, but may be recorded in individual health records. In order to confirm whether this information is held we would therefore have to individually access all health 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 health 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 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 Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 I seek the following information on elective operations:

1. The number of elective operations scheduled. I would like this information for January 2019 to November 2020, broken down by month i.e. the total number of elective operations that were scheduled for January 2019, February 2019 etc.

A1 UHNM has asked for clarification twice but unfortunately your responses does not narrow the search sufficiently for us to answer your request. The link you refer to is for cancelled operations NOT elective operations. There are no national submissions that relate to scheduled operations. *Information not held.*

Q2 The number of elective operations performed. I would like this information for January 2019 to November 2020, broken down by month.

A2 See below: Using where the patients Admission method = 11, 12 or 13 to identify elective patients.

Month	2019	2020
Jan	10065	9705
Feb	9259	8802
Mar	10087	7523
Apr	9352	3549
May	9696	3929
Jun	9059	4944
Jul	9839	6451
Aug	9346	6418
Sep	9416	7421
Oct	9988	8085
Nov	9601	6569
Dec	8755	

Q3 The number of elective operations cancelled at the “last minute”, as defined by the NHS when providing data on cancelled elective operations. I would like this information for January 2019 to November 2020, broken down by month.

The NHS defines “last minute” as “on the day the patient was due to arrive, after the patient has arrived in hospital or on the day of the operation or surgery”. See files available at: <http://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/cancelled-elective-operations/cancelled-ops-data/>

A3 As answer 1- note: This website is generated using information Trusts supply to NHS England via the return called the QMCO, however this return is currently suspended until further notice so there is no requirement for the Trust to collate the information

Q4 The number of breaches of the standard, as defined by the NHS when providing data on cancelled elective operations. I would like this information for January 2019 to November 2020, broken down by month.

The NHS defines “breaches of the standard” as the “number of patients not treated within 28 days of the last minute cancellation” of an elective operation. See files available at: <http://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/cancelled-elective-operations/cancelled-ops-data/>

A4 As answer 1

Q5 The total number of elective operations cancelled, regardless of how long cancellations were made before scheduled operation times, if this information is also collected. I would like this information for January 2019 to November 2020, broken down by month i.e. the total number of elective operations cancelled in January 2019, February 2019 etc.

A5 As answer 1

*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.

If following review of the responses I can be of any further assistance please contact my secretary on 01782 671612.



University Hospitals
of North Midlands
NHS Trust

Yours,

Jean Lehnert
Data, Security & Protection Manager