



Ref: FOIA Reference 2019/20-069

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

Date: 20th May 2019

Email foi@uhnm.nhs.uk

Dear

I am writing in response to your email dated 6th May 2019 (received into our office 7th May) requesting information under the Freedom of Information Act (2000) regarding PET/CT scans.

On 7th May 2019 we contacted you via email as we required clarification on what you meant by two week rule? Please can you also confirm if you mean financial year or calendar year?

On the same day you replied via email with the following:

*“With reference to the suspected cancer cases referred for imaging - How many cases (number of cases and percentage of cases referred) have waited two weeks or more from the date of referral for imaging? Does that make sense?
I mean calendar year”.*

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.

Please note that at UHNM we operate the PET-CT service as sub-contractors on behalf of another company and all the data below has been supplied by the company.

Q1 How many patients under the two week rule waited more than two weeks for their PET/CT scans at the PET centres at the University Hospital of North Midlands NHS Trust last year?

A1 98% of patients received their scan within two weeks.

Q2 How many PET-CT scans have been delayed and /or cancelled at these PET centres in the last year?

A2 17.4% of scans at this site were rescheduled or cancelled. Where scans were rescheduled, 80% of the time they were rebooked and completed within the next three days.

Q3 What is the reason given for these scans being delayed?

- A3 There are a wide variety of reasons for this. It's important to note that this may be driven by a patient's own decision or the advice of a clinician to delay the scan until further tests are run. The most frequent reasons which were cited for a delay or cancellation include:
- Patient choice to delay or change appointment
 - Clinician choice to delay- e.g. to carry out another test before the PET- CT scan
 - Radio Isotope production/ quality assurance failure- on the day production of a fragile radioactive isotope can fail in its manufacturing and/ or quality assurance processes
 - Transport delays- for either the patient not able to attend the appointment or the isotope not able to be delivered within the required half-life time from the manufacturing site.

Please also note:

A. Background information – about PET-CT scanning

- PET-CT scans are very complex, and highly tailored to the individual patient – with certain patients, and certain scans requiring a particular 'tracer'. These tracers are harmless, mildly radioactive chemicals which allow these scans to work so effectively.
- As they are radioactive, these tracers are subject to a 'half-life' which means they naturally deteriorate in a matter of hours before they are no longer usable. The tracers are produced on the day of the scan at sites across the UK. They are then transported to scanning units.
- For patient safety, distributed batches are locked until scanning unit managers are provided an unlock code by the quality control team, essentially approving that batch for use. The batch must be tested while already in transit, as otherwise it may not last long enough to be usable.
- If a batch fails the quality control test it cannot be safely used, and we must therefore reschedule any appointments that day which would have required a tracer from that failed batch. This is entirely to ensure patient safety, and as stated we would endeavour to reschedule any appointments within three days.

*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.

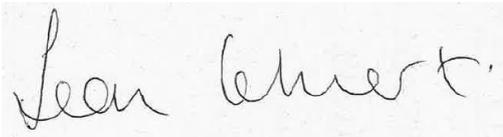
Should you have a complaint about the response or the handling of your request, please also contact my office to request a review of this. If having exhausted the Trust's FOIA complaints process you are still not satisfied, you are entitled to approach the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) and 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 676474.

Yours,



Jean Lehnert
Information Governance Manager