



Ref: FOIA Reference 2019/20-286

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

Date: 21st August 2019

Email foi@uhnm.nhs.uk

Dear

I am writing in response to your email dated 13th August 2019 requesting information under the Freedom of Information Act (2000) regarding vaginal mesh surgeries.

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 3 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 individual 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 individual 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*

Under section 16 of the FOI Act we are required to provide requestors with advice and assistance where possible. We would therefore like to advise you that if your request is shortened to just questions 1 and 2 we are able to comply within the 18 hour time frame. In order to avoid delay to your response we have provided this below.

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 I am writing to request information related to vaginal mesh surgery statistics held by University Hospitals of North Midlands under the above-mentioned Act.

If possible, I would like you to provide me with the following information:

- **The number of surgeries performed using vaginal mesh to treat pelvic organ prolapse or urinary incontinence for the last available fiscal year and previous years (up to 10 years in the past)**

A1 We are unable to provide the information you require in the requested format as to release this data could lead to the identification of the person(s) involved due to the low numbers involved,

and would breach the Trusts obligations under Data Protection Act 2018. Accordingly, this aspect of your request is exempt from disclosure under the terms of Section 40(2) of the FOI Act. *Personal information*. However as the Trust is committed to openness and transparency we can band the numbers.

This exemption is an absolute exemption and therefore no consideration of the public interest test is needed.

Please see below; note that information prior to 2012 is not held.

Fiscal Year	Surgeries Performed
2011/2012	24
2012/2013	12
2013/2014	16
2014/2015	6
2015/2016	5
2017/2018	<5
2018/2019	<5
Grand Total	68

Notes:

OPCS codes Used to identify surgeries performed:

P236, P237, P238, P245, P246, P248, P281, P282, P301, P302, P228

We are unable to identify the reason why a patient had a particular procedure. This means we are unable to say if the patients identified has having surgery which used vaginal mesh was to treat pelvic organ prolapse or urinary incontinence.

Q2 The total number of pelvic organ prolapse surgeries that were performed on women and men (separate statistics) between 01 April 2018 and 01 April 2019

A2 Please see below: please note we had no recorded male patients under the coding given for this procedure.

Gender	2018/2019
Female	133

Notes

OPCS codes Used to identify surgeries performed:

P22, P23, H425, H426, H35

Q3 The total number of patients who were recommended pelvic floor muscle training as treatment for their pelvic organ prolapse between 01 April 2018 and 01 April 2019

In terms of pelvic organs, I refer to the pelvic organs such as the bladder, uterus, vagina, bowel, and rectum.

A3 Section 12 and 14 exemptions as detailed above.

*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.

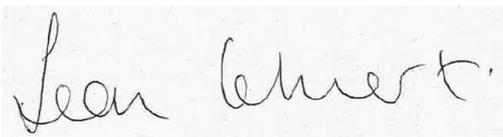
Should you have a complaint about the response or the handling of your request, please also contact my office to request a review of this. If having exhausted the Trust's FOIA complaints process you are still not satisfied, you are entitled to approach the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) and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

Yours,



Jean Lehnert
Information Governance Manager