

Ref: FOIA Reference 2020/21-334

Date: 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2020

**Royal Stoke University Hospital  
Data, Security and Protection**  
Newcastle Road  
Stoke-on-Trent  
Staffordshire  
ST4 6QG  
Email [foi@uhnm.nhs.uk](mailto:foi@uhnm.nhs.uk)

Dear

I am writing in response to your email dated 7<sup>th</sup> November 2020 (received into our office 9<sup>th</sup> November) requesting information under the Freedom of Information Act (2000) regarding adult autopsies.

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 Please may you provide the number of consented adult autopsies performed within your Trust in the year 2019?**

**Some comments to help clarify the request are included below. In addition to the clarifications below, please bear in mind that this request is about the year 2019 and is not a request that asks whether the Trust currently performs autopsies; I do ask that the response specifically relate to the year 2019 and therefore a response to the effect ‘our Trust does not perform autopsies’ does not answer this request.**

**For the purposes of this request:**

An autopsy is an invasive examination of a deceased body, where organs are removed and inspected, typically by a pathologist. This does not include single-organ retrieval, for example, brain donation. It also does not include anatomical dissection/prosecution performed only for the purposes of teaching healthcare students. A consented autopsy (also known as a hospital autopsy) is an autopsy where the legal basis relied upon is consent, rather than the instruction of a coroner.

2019 refers to the date of the evisceration stage of the autopsy, rather than the date of death or the completion of the autopsy report. ‘Adult’ means where the deceased was 18 years or over at the time of death. Where your Trust has changed its name within the year 2019, please include consented adult autopsies that took place within the Trust under its previous name.

Where a case has been referred into to your Trust for a consented autopsy by a different Trust, please do include it. Where your Trust has referred a case out to a different Trust for a consented autopsy, please do not include it.

**Where more than one Trust has merged to form a single Trust (e.g. where one Trust has acquired another), please include all consented adult autopsies that took place within 2019 for all the Trusts involved. Should a different Trust have split and become part acquired by your Trust and part acquired a different Trust, please let me know so data is not duplicated.**

- 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 as being <5.

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

\*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.

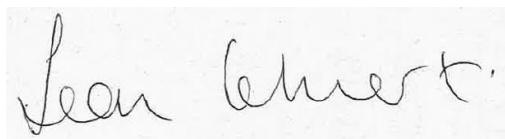
Should you have a complaint about the response or the handling of your request, please also contact my office to request a review of this. If having exhausted the Trust's FOIA complaints process you are still not satisfied, you are entitled to approach the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) and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