



Ref: FOIA Reference 2020/21-420

Date: 26th January 2021

Email foi@uhnm.nhs.uk

Dear

I am writing in response to your email dated 25th December 2020 (received into our office 29th December 2020) requesting information under the Freedom of Information Act (2000) regarding Covid-19.

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 your questions 1, 2 and 5 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 we can comply with your request within the 18 hour timeframe if your questions are reduced to information that is held centrally. In order to avoid further 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 To aid me in some research, I am wishing to gather various data/information under the Freedom of Information Act regarding the number of deaths within the University Hospitals of North Midlands NHS Trust. I am wishing to gather information:

1) How many deaths between 1st Feb 2020 and 30th Nov 2020 were 'from' Covid-19?

A1 Section 12 exemption as detailed above. You may find further information at the following link:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/causesofdeath>

Q2 How many deaths between 1st Feb 2020 and 30th Nov 2020 were 'with' Covid-19?

A2 As answer 1

Q3 How many of those patients who died 'with' or 'from' Covid-19 had pre-existing conditions or co-morbidities which would have contributed to the death?

A3 I can confirm that the Trust holds information regarding Covid-19 had pre-existing conditions or co-morbidities, but feel this information is exempt under section 21: *information reasonably accessible by other means*. This is because the information is available via the Trust's public website at the following link: FOI ref 396-2021 (December 20/21).

<http://www.uhnm.nhs.uk/about-us/regulatory-information/freedom-of-information-publication-scheme/freedom-of-information-disclosure-log/>

Q4 How were the patients who died, 'with' or 'from' Covid-19, diagnosed with this disease, and specifically, what kind of testing/assessment procedures were used to reach a conclusive diagnosis?

A4 Please see below for the kind of testing/assessment procedures were used to reach a conclusive diagnosis:

96% are nose and throat swabs whilst the other 4% is made up of sputum tests (less than 1%) and specimen type not given.

Q5 For the patients who died 'with' or 'from' Covid-19, how would their level of illness be categorized? Eg: asymptomatic, mild symptoms, severe symptoms, cytokine storm achieved (with deadly inflammatory response)

A5 Section 12 exemption applies.

*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.

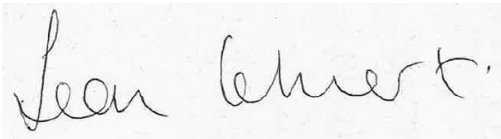
Should you have a complaint about the response or the handling of your request, please also contact my office to request a review of this. If having exhausted the Trust's FOIA complaints process you are still not satisfied, you are entitled to approach the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) and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