



Ref: FOIA Reference 2021/22-571

Royal Stoke University Hospital
Data, Security and Protection
Newcastle Road
Stoke-on-Trent
Staffordshire
ST4 6QG

Date: 8th March 2022

Email foi@uhnm.nhs.uk

Dear

I am writing to acknowledge receipt of your email dated 10th February 2022 requesting information under the Freedom of Information Act (2000) regarding Musculoskeletal Services

The University Hospitals of North Midlands Trust is committed to the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

However, the NHS is facing unprecedented challenges relating to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic at the current time. Understandably, our resources have been diverted to support our front-line colleagues who are working tremendously hard to provide care for our patients, and to those in need of our services.

We strive to be transparent and to work with an open culture. But at this time, whilst care of our patients and the safety of our staff takes precedent, it is likely that responses to some requests for information will be delayed. We apologise for this position in advance, and will endeavour to provide you with as much information as we can, as soon as we are able.

The Information Commissioners Office has recognised the current situation in the NHS.

As of 1st November 2014 University Hospitals of North Midlands NHS Trust (UHM) 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 regarding services that you provide for musculoskeletal conditions, and specifically low back pain. I would appreciate your help with the following questions. The questions are all with regards to outpatient and/or community physiotherapy services:

1. Please briefly outline the relevant services within outpatient and/or community physiotherapy that you are commissioned to provide for musculoskeletal conditions, and any services that are specific to back pain?

A1 The Trust is commissioned to provide services for patients from A&E, Fracture Clinic, post-surgery and post trauma rehab

Q2 What is the current average waiting time for a musculoskeletal physiotherapy appointment for a new referral or self-referral for non-specific lower back pain? (if you are not able to answer this specifically for low back pain please provide the figure for musculoskeletal physiotherapy more generally in your service)

A2 All patients are appointed at the time of referral following a triage process and the wait time is between 1-3 weeks dependent on clinical condition

Q3 How has the waiting time for musculoskeletal physiotherapy appointments for lower back pain changed over the historical time period for which you have data? If possible, an annual figure for each of the last 5-10 years would be most helpful. (Again, please answer for general musculoskeletal physiotherapy services if you do not hold specific data for back pain).

A3 All patients are appointed at the time of referral following a triage process and the wait time is between 1-3 weeks dependent on clinical condition

Q4 How many patients are currently on your waiting list(s) for physiotherapy services for lower back pain?

A4 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 this question 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 the questions that we are able to comply within the 18 hour time frame.

Q5 How many patients are currently on your waiting list(s) for physiotherapy services across all musculoskeletal conditions?

A5 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 this question 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*

Q6 Does your musculoskeletal physiotherapy service(s) accept self-referrals from patients for back pain (as opposed to requiring a GP or primary care referral)?

A6 Referrals are only accepted via a staff self-referral service

Q7 What is the contract type by which you are commissioned to provide musculoskeletal physiotherapy services?

a. If paid by activity and/or outcomes/results please provide the unit costs used to charge the CCG (e.g. cost per physio appointment)

b. If part of a block contract please provide the details of any KPIs (and the associated incentives) within that block contract used to measure/monitor the quality of MSK physiotherapy services

A7 Services are now commissioned via a block contract. The only KPI relates to a NP: FP 1.2.18

Q8 How does the average healthcare spend per patient for non-specific low back pain break down across different services and costs?

A8 UHNM is unable to break this down as this as it is part of a wider budget

*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.

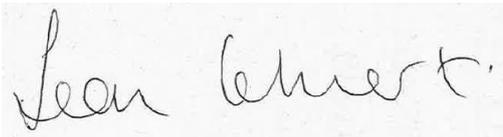
Should you have a complaint about the response or the handling of your request, please also contact my office to request a review of this. If having exhausted the Trust's FOIA complaints process you are still not satisfied, you are entitled to approach the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) and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

Yours,



Jean Lehnert
Data, Security & Protection Manager