



Ref: FOIA Reference 2022/23-094

Date: 20th June 2022

Email foi@uhnm.nhs.uk

Dear

I am writing to acknowledge receipt of your email dated 25th May 2022 requesting information under the Freedom of Information Act (2000) regarding hypoxic challenge testing.

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 (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 would like to make a freedom of information request regarding hypoxic challenge testing (often part as a "fit to fly" assessment as follows:

1. Does the Trust provide hypoxic challenge testing services?

A1 Yes

Q2 If yes, is HCT testing provided as an NHS service or as a private service?

A2 Private Service and both sites

Q3 If HCT testing is offered as a private service, what is the fee?

A3 £72 both sites

- Q4 Do patients need a GP referral or consultant referral to access hypoxic challenge testing?**
- A4 Consultant referral
- Q5 How is the HCT/fitness to fly service "marketed" to GPs and private patients?**
- A5 It is not specifically marketed, but offered as part of respiratory physiology investigations/assessments (HCT) with referring consultant confirming if the patient is FTF
- Q6 Which patient groups / morbidities typically require HCT testing? e.g. patients with interstitial lung disease etc.**
- A6 Motor Neurone Disease, Interstitial Lung Disease & Chronic Obstructive pulmonary Disease
- Q7 How many hypoxic challenge tests have been completed in the last year?**
- A7 19
- Q8 What is the current waiting time to access an HCT test?**
- A8 <6 weeks
- Q9 Has the emergence of long Covid added to demand for fit to fly assessments in recent months?**
- A9 No
- Q10 For patients referred for a fitness to fly assessment, what outputs does the patient receive? e.g. a letter from a respiratory consultant advising whether they will need supplementary oxygen when flying, a consultation, any other intervention.**
- A10 Letter or completion of airline documentation stating whether supplemental oxygen is required, if so what flow rate and medical opinion of if the patient is fit to fly.

*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.

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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.

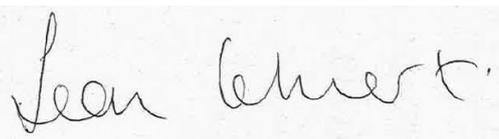
Should you have a complaint about the response or the handling of your request, please also contact my office to request a review of this. If having exhausted the Trust's FOIA complaints process you are still not satisfied, you are entitled to approach the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) and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