

**Information Governance Department**

Wrightington Hospital  
Hall Lane  
Appley Bridge  
Wigan  
WN6 9EP

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Ref: FOI2020/7142

Date Received: 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2020

Response Due: 20<sup>th</sup> November 2020

Date: 11<sup>th</sup> November 2020

Dear Sir/Madam

**INFORMATION REQUEST UNDER THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000**

**You asked:**

**If you could please respond to the following questions:**

**1. How many Physician Associates are currently working in your trust? (please can you include their pay banding and department) - <5**

We are unable to provide precise figures when these are five or less due to the risk that individuals will be identified, as we are required to protect their identity under the Data Protection Act.

Please see refusal notice (below)

**2. How many Physician Associate vacancies are currently available? (please can you include their pay banding and department)**

We currently have no advertised vacancies for these roles.

**3. How many Physician Associates are you planning to employ?**

The Trust advertised for 2 PA posts last year however there were no appointments made. There are currently no plans to attempt to recruit again as all immediate workforce plans are to support deployment of staff to support pandemic operational plans. When workforce planning resumes following the immediate operational priorities consideration to progress with PA posts will be assessed.

**4. Please may you disclose if there are currently any business cases being drawn up to try to employ physician associates, and if so please can you send as much detail as possible regarding this.**

None currently

**5. As there been any rejected or failed business cases to employ physician associates and why wasn't it accepted?**

No

**6. If physician associates are employed in your trust, how do their staff satisfaction surveys compare to other staff members, particularly doctors?**

We are not able to report to a granular level for the one employee in post.

**Refusal Notice for questions 1 & 6:** having considered the Public Interest Test, due to the low numbers involved the Trust is applying Section 40(2) and (3) personal data and therefore we are unable to provide this information.

Due to the low numbers involved there is a high risk that a living individual could be identified from the information that has been requested or from that information and other information that may be available. This may lead to undue stress of families and patients. To disclose this information would:

- a) Contravene the Data Protection Act principles in that it would amount to unfair and possibly unlawful processing, as there was a legitimate expectation by the third parties that this information would remain confidential, and
- b) Disclosure may cause damage or distress to the individual(s) involved, and that damage or distress would be unwarranted (section 10 of the DPA).

I trust that this information is helpful to you, however if you are not entirely satisfied with this response please do not hesitate to contact the Information Governance Department on 01257 488271. If we do not hear from you within 28 days we will assume that we have been able to accommodate your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alison Balson'. The signature is stylized, with a large, looped 'A' and a cursive 'Balson'.

Alison Balson  
Director of Workforce

PLEASE NOTE:

If you are unhappy with the service you have received in relation to your request and wish to make a complaint or request a review of our decision, you should write to: Information Governance Department,

Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh NHS Foundation Trust, Wrightington Hospital, Hall Lane, Appley Bridge, Wigan, WN6 9EP

If you are not content with the outcome of your complaint, you may apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision at:

The Information Commissioner's Office  
Wycliffe House  
Water Lane  
Wilmslow  
Cheshire, SK9 5AF

Helpline number: 0303 123 1113