



Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh Teaching Hospitals

NHS Foundation Trust

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Chief Nurse

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Ref: FOI/2024/9842

Date Received: 9th May 2024

Response Due: 7th June 2024

Date: 4th June 2024

Dear Sir/Madam

With reference to your request for information received on 9th May 2024, I can confirm in accordance with Section 1 (1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 that we do hold the information you have requested. A response to each part of your request is provided below.

In your request you asked:

a. Do you currently use virtual wards? (Y/N)

Yes.

b. If yes,

- i. **Can you please specify how many virtual wards beds you have and the provider by specialty (Cancer care, respiratory care, cardiology care, diabetes care, stroke care, renal care, pre/post-operative care services, other)?**

The Trust is unable to provide this information by specialty as the beds are flexible, therefore only the total number of virtual ward beds has been supplied on the attached.

- ii. **How many patients have been admitted in virtual wards, per specialty, for the Financial Years (FY) 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023 and 2024YTD (Year to Date)?**

Please see attached.

- iii. **What are the values of the contracts you have in place split by specialty and provider?**

This information is being withheld under Section 43 of the Freedom of Information Act. Please see below.

- iv. **What are the durations of the contracts you have in place split by specialty and provider?**

Please see attached.

c. If no,

- i. If you are not currently using virtual wards, are you planning on using them in the future?**
Yes
- ii. For which specialties are you planning on using them?**
Orthopaedic.
- iii. When would you start?**
Within the next 6 months.

The Trust has a policy of not releasing information when the data involved is less than 5. This is because we feel that such low numbers could make the individuals involved identifiable and therefore may cause undue harm and distress.

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).

Section 43(2) – Commercial interests

Information regarding the contract value has been withheld under section 43(2) of the FOIA if its disclosure would be likely to prejudice the commercial interests of the Trust.

Section 43 of the FOIA is a qualified exemption and is subject to the Prejudice Test and the Public Interest Test.

Prejudice test

We confirm that we have carried out a full prejudice test and that, on the balance of probability, the Trust's interests would be prejudiced in the event of disclosure. Therefore, we confirm that the Prejudice Test is engaged.

Public interest test

We have also carried out the Public Interest Test to ascertain whether the public interest in disclosure outweighs the public interest in withholding the requested information:

Public interest in disclosure of the information:

- We acknowledge that there is public interest in transparency around how the Trust engages with suppliers and procurement.
- We acknowledge that there is public interest in the Trust's finances.

Public interest in withholding of the information:

• **Protecting public finances** – As a public authority, the Trust must ensure that it obtains the best value for money. Disclosure of the information would be likely to affect the quality of future offers provided to the Trust. It is therefore firmly in the public interest not to disclose any information which would affect commercial offers made to the Trust, which in turn will affect the Trust's finances.

• **Ensuring fair competition** – Information provided to the Trust during the procurement process contains sensitive competition information. It is not in the public interest to disclose information which would affect free and fair competition.

• **Transparency** – We understand that there is public interest in how the Trust engages with suppliers. However, we consider that the information held by the Trust would not significantly further the public understanding of its relationship with these suppliers beyond what has already been disclosed in this response.

• **Reputation damage or loss of confidence** - It is firmly in the public interest that the Trust takes all steps to protect its reputation around information handling. It is not in the public interest to do anything which would jeopardise our ability to maintain strong working relationships with third parties.

If you are not entirely satisfied with this response, please do not hesitate to contact the Information Governance Department via the email address provided. If we do not hear from you within 40 days, we will assume that we have been able to accommodate your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Yours sincerely,



KEVIN PARKER-EVANS

Kevin Parker-Evans MBA, FCMJ, CMgr. RN Dip HE

Interim Chief Nurse & Director of Infection Prevention and Control

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, Wroughton, Wigan and Leigh NHS Foundation Trust, Suite 9, Buckingham Row, Brick Kiln Lane, Wigan, WN1 1XX.

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 123 111