

Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh Teaching Hospitals

NHS Foundation Trust

Information Governance Department

Suite 9
Buckingham Row
Brick Kiln Lane
Wigan
WN1 1XX

Email: foi@wwl.nhs.uk

Web: www.wwl.nhs.uk

Ref: FOI/2024/9795

Date Received: 15th April 2024

Response Due: 15th May 2024

Date: 15th May 2024

Dear Sir/Madam

With reference to your request for information received on 15th April 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:

- 1. What is the average number of patients per day requiring thickened drinks across all wards?**
The Trust is unable to provide this data as it is not recorded centrally, if recorded it would be held within individual case notes. As case notes are for the care and treatment of patients, we do not request staff to interrogate them in order to collate the information required to respond to Freedom of Information requests.
- 2. What is the average no of thickened drinks provided per patient, per day?**
The Trust is unable to provide this data as it is not recorded centrally, if recorded it would be held within individual case notes. As case notes are for the care and treatment of patients, we do not request staff to interrogate them in order to collate the information required to respond to Freedom of Information requests.
- 3. What are the core options of thickened drinks offered to patients both hot and cold e.g. coffee, tea, orange squash?**
The Trust does not record what liquid the medicine is put in.
- 4. Which brand(s) of thickener do you use for thickening fluids?**
Nestle Resource Thicken Up Clear
- 5. Is thickener bought directly from the manufacturer or via another source e.g. NHS supply chain?**
Wholesaler

6. What is the quantity (KG) of thickener purchased in the last 12 months?

326KG

7. What was the cost of thickener purchased in the last 12 months?

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

8. Are purchase of thickeners contracted in any way i.e. by way of a framework or minimum contract period and/or minimum amount required to be purchased? If yes, please provide details.

No

9. If contracted, is any agreement in place for rebates or for a certain amount of product to be supplied free of charge? If yes, please provide details.

No

10. If contracted, can you advise the current contract term and when this is due to expire?

N/A

11. On discharge, do you recommend the same brand you use on inpatient wards to patients for use at home, or give them multiple suggestions for brands of thickener they could use?

The same brand is added to the Discharge Letter completed by the ward doctors. GP's will prescribe the brand they prefer.

12. On discharge, would patients generally be prescribed thickener, or would they be expected to buy this (no prescription)?

Thickener is prescribed by GPs for those patients who require it ongoing.

13. If prescribed, do you know a rough % of patients who would be eligible for free prescriptions?

No

Section 43(2) – Commercial interests

Information regarding costing 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,



Kelly Knowles
Operational Director of Finance

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, 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