

NHS Information Governance

What is the Freedom of Information Act?

It is a law passed by the Government that gives you the right to request information from public services. The aim of the Act is to promote trust and confidence in our public services, including the NHS, by providing clear information and being open about what we do.

When can I exercise these rights?

Since October 2003 all NHS organisations have had to “adopt and maintain” a Publication Scheme. The main part of the Act came into force in January 2005 and now, anyone is allowed to request any information held by the Trust, subject to certain exemptions listed in the Act.

What information can I obtain?

You can obtain corporate information about the business processes of the Trust. We have already made the majority of the corporate information we produce available through our Publication Scheme. This Scheme contains a guide to the types of information we have already made available or intend to make available in the near future.

What types of information are available?

The Act refers to “classes” of information, and a class is the information available on a particular topic. Our Scheme is divided into seven broad classes covering the following:

- **Who we are and what we do**
Organisational information, locations and contacts, constitutional and legal governance.
- **What we spend and how we spend it**
Financial information relating to projected and actual income and expenditure, tendering, procurement and contracts
- **What our priorities are and how we are doing**
Strategy and performance information, plans, assessments, inspections and reviews.
- **How we make decisions**
Policy proposals and decisions. Decision making processes, internal criteria and procedures, consultations.
- **Our policies and procedures**
Current written protocols for delivering our functions and responsibilities
- **Lists and registers**
Information held in registers required by law and other lists and registers relating to the functions of the authority.
- **The services we offer**
Advice and guidance, booklets and leaflets, transactions and media releases. A description of the services offered

Our Publication Scheme is supported by our Guide to Information that sets out the specific information that we publish, the format that we publish it in and (where appropriate) any charge we make for providing the information to you.

We recognise the importance of the freedom of information and we have therefore made sure that the majority of corporate information we produce is available and that other information will be readily available on request.

What information is already available?

Together these two documents provide a complete guide to the information routinely published by us.

It is important to us that the Publication Scheme and Guide meet your needs and we have designed them to be a route map so that you can find information about the Trust easily. However, if you feel there is information that could usefully be added to either document that we have missed, please feel free to contact us on the address below.

Can I get access to information about myself or other patients?

The Freedom of Information Act does not change the legal right of patients to protection of their patient confidentiality. Maintaining this right of confidentiality is an important commitment for all NHS organisations. To help with this, all Trusts have appointed someone who is called a Caldicott Guardian, and who has responsibility to ensure the protection of patient confidentiality throughout each Trust in accordance with patient legal rights. The Caldicott Guardian for our Practice is: Dr Jeremy Black

You may obtain access to your own health records under the Data Protection Act 1998. See our leaflet on Access to Health Records available from the address below.

Will I be able to get access to all of the Trust's information?

The right to obtain information may be limited by some exemptions which are listed within the Act. The effect of the exemptions is that we may not be able to supply all or part of the information requested. If possible we will supply the information requested with the exempt information removed.

Is there a charge for information supplied from the Publication Scheme?

Ordinarily we will charge no fee for documents contained within our Publication Scheme, unless the supply of information requires us to carry out significant amounts of work or photocopying. We make no charge if information is requested that is not contained within the Publication Scheme.

How do I get access to information not contained within the Publication Scheme?

You must make your request in writing, which includes by email. The request must include your name and address so that we can contact you. You do not need to tell us why you want the information, however you must give us enough detail about the information you require to allow us to correctly identify and find it. If we require a fee we shall inform you of this once we have received your request. When we have received your payment we have 20 working days to send you the information you have requested

Where can I see the Guide to Information?

Our Publication Scheme and Guide to Information can be obtained from the following address:

Bishops Road Medical Centre

Complaints and appeals

Any complaints about our handling of your request or about our Publication Scheme should in the first instance be addressed to:

The Freedom of Information Lead
Julie Brewerton Practice Manager

You are also free to contact the Government Department with responsibility for ensuring organisations comply with the Freedom of Information Act:

The Information Commissioner

Wycliffe House

Water Lane

Wilmslow

Cheshire SK9 5AF

Tel: 0303 123 1113 (local rate) or 01625 545 745 (national rate)

Fax: 01625 524 510

Email: mail@ico.gsi.gov.uk