

THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT (2000)

What you need to know

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 bodies. 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.

What information can I obtain?

You can obtain corporate information about the business processes of the Trust. We have already made some corporate information 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 being made available?

The Act refers to “classes” of information, and a class is the information available on a particular topic. Therefore a class could be a specific document, such as the Trust policy on the Data Protection Act 1998, or it could refer to a particular area, e.g. planned building works which is likely to consist of a variety of documents – blue-prints, consultation papers, photographs, supplier contracts, etc. Information is not limited to paper documents it also includes available information on our website, which is also part of our Publication Scheme.

What information is already available?

We recognise the importance of the freedom of information and we have therefore made sure that some corporate information is available through our Publication Scheme and that other information will be readily available on request.

Our Publication Scheme is a complete guide to the information routinely published by us. It is important to us that the Scheme meets your needs and we have designed it to be a route map so that you can find information about the Trust easily.

The Publication Scheme is available on request or online via the Freedom of Information section of our website.

Please visit <https://chsft.nhs.uk/media/freedom-information> for more information.

Or email: foi@chsft.nhs.uk

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 confidentiality. All NHS Trusts must appoint a Caldicott Guardian who is responsible for protecting patient confidentiality in accordance with a patient's legal rights.

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 there is no charge for documents contained within our Publication Scheme, unless the supply of information requires us to carry out significant amounts of work. We may 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 and 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. After receiving payment we have 20 working days in which to return the information you have requested.

Please write to: Freedom of Information
 Department of Corporate Affairs
 City Hospitals Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust
 Sunderland Royal Hospital
 Kayll Road
 Sunderland SR4 7TP

Information and Enquiries

For further information please contact the Freedom of Information team on 0191 565 6256 or email via foi@chsft.nhs.uk.

Complaints and appeals

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

Complaints Department
City Hospitals Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust
Sunderland Royal Hospital
Kayll Road
Sunderland
SR4 7TP

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: 01625 545 745
Fax: 01625 524 510
<https://ico.org.uk/>

This information was correct at the time of printing. While the Trust makes every reasonable effort to keep its information leaflets up to date, very recent changes may not yet be reflected in the guidance and you should discuss this guidance with the clinical staff at the time of your appointment.

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