

# Obtaining information from us under the Freedom of Information Act 2000



## What is the Freedom of Information Act?

The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) entitles anybody to ask a public authority in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, including government departments and NHS Trusts, for any recorded information that they keep.

A list of organisations covered by the Act is available at [www.foi.gov.uk/coverage.htm](http://www.foi.gov.uk/coverage.htm)

The FOIA gives the public greater access to information about how decisions are made in government and how public services are developed and delivered.

The FOIA operates alongside the Data Protection Act, which allows you to access information about yourself.

## How do I ask for information?

All requests for information must be made in writing. You must clearly state what information you are requesting and supply your name and contact details eg email or postal address. You should send this to the Information Governance Manager at the Trust Headquarters by one of the following means:

Post: South Western Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust, Abbey Court, Eagle Way, Exeter, Devon EX2 7HY

Fax: 01392 261516

Email: [publicrelations@swast.nhs.uk](mailto:publicrelations@swast.nhs.uk)

All public authorities covered by the FOIA are also required to have a publication scheme. The scheme tells you what information is available, how you can obtain it and whether you have to pay for it. Check our publication scheme to see if the information you want is listed. This could save both you and us time and money as a lot of information is published on our website.

You can request this or view it at [www.swast.nhs.uk](http://www.swast.nhs.uk)



## What type of information can I ask for?

You can ask to have recorded information. This can be in any form, e.g. emails, notebooks, videos or tapes.

## In what format can I request information?

We will provide the information in the format you ask for if we can, i.e. on paper or electronically. If we cannot we will advise you how we are able to provide it. In some cases, such as people with disabilities, there may be an entitlement to a particular format and you can discuss this with us if you believe it to be the case.

## When will I receive this information?

In most cases we must respond to you within 20 working days of receiving your request. If we cannot, we will explain why and let you know when you will receive a reply.

## Can my request be declined?

The FOIA sets out reasons and circumstances where we can or must withhold information we are asked for, such as someone else's personal details. Unless one of these applies we will provide the information if we hold it.

If we withhold any or part of the information we will tell you why. If you are not satisfied by our explanation you can ask us to reconsider. We will provide details of how you do this when we tell you we are unable to supply any information.

The decision will be reviewed by a panel of non-executive directors who will not have been involved with the original request. If you are not happy with the outcome of this, you can ask the Information Commissioner's office to review that decision.

The Information Commissioner's Office is an independent body that enforces the FOIA and the Data Protection Act.

For more information, visit [www.ico.gov.uk](http://www.ico.gov.uk) or call 08453 091 091.



## How much will it cost to make a request?

Most of the information is supplied free of charge. But you are likely to have to pay a fee if you ask for a lot of information which takes a long time to compile or costs a lot to copy. We will tell you in advance if a fee will apply and suggest ways in which you might revise your request so a charge is not made for it.

## How am I allowed to use the information I obtain?

You must ask us if you want to use the information you obtain from us for any purpose other than your own interest and information, such as if you want to include it in material you publish or make it available to others.

The request must be made in writing and clearly state how you want to use the information and why. We will consider your request in accordance with regulations that govern the re-use of information obtained from the public sector and will respond within 20 working days with our decision.

If we do not agree to your request, we will tell you why and set out how you can ask for this to be reconsidered.

Be aware that we are entitled to charge you for re-using information we have supplied. In most cases, we will only do so if you pass the information on or publish it for commercial or business purposes.

## How can I find out more?

For more information on the FOIA, visit [www.foi.gov.uk](http://www.foi.gov.uk) or [www.ico.gov.uk](http://www.ico.gov.uk)

For information on regulations concerning the re-use of public sector information, visit [www.opsi.gov.uk](http://www.opsi.gov.uk).

