

Decision issued under the Freedom of Information Act 2000

Our Reference: CQC IAT 2014 0153

Date of Response: 12 March 2014

Information Requested:

“Request re FGM policies and procedures at

- Bristol Royal Hospital For Children***
- Bristol Royal Infirmary***
- South Bristol Community Hospital***
- Bristol Sexual Health Centre***
- Frenchay Hospital, Bristol***
- St.Michaels Hospital, Bristol***

1. How many women since 2009 has the hospital treated who have been victims of Female Genital Mutilation?

2. What is the hospitals policy when dealing or coming into contact with Female Genital Mutilation?

3. What training is given to the hospitals staff on Female Genital Mutilation?

4. How many times since 2009 have police or welfare officials been called by the hospital as a result of Female Genital Mutilation?

5. What is the hospitals policy on reporting Female Genital Mutilation to the police/ welfare officials?

6. How many babies have been born to mothers who have suffered Female Genital Mutilation since 2009?”

The Information Access team has now coordinated a response to your request and we are able to confirm that the Care Quality Commission (CQC) is unlikely to hold recorded information in relation to this matter.

This is because our current remit does not include gathering data specifically relating to FGM. It is possible that cases of FGM may have been reported to CQC as ‘statutory notifications’ if harm had been caused by the hospital itself, but not in order to collate general figures on instances of FGM. On balance we are

highly unlikely to hold any such notifications and in addition to this, should we hold any such notifications they are unlikely to be relevant to your purpose for the reason stated above.

In addition to this, the time it would take to locate, retrieve and extract any such data for the six services noted, over a period of 5 years, would be extremely likely to exceed the cost limit set out by s12 of the FOIA and therefore be exempt. This is because we would have to perform manual searches of all of the notifications in order to extract any possible FGM data.

Current procedures relating to FGM

[Www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) states that it is the responsibility of National Health Service trusts to ensure that their staff follow correct safeguarding procedures. NHS staff have a legal obligation to safeguard children, so whenever they identify a child who may be at risk of female genital mutilation (FGM) or who has already been subjected to FGM, they must always respond by involving the appropriate authorities as set out in the “Female Genital Mutilation Multi-Agency Practice Guidelines” (2011).

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/female-genital-mutilation-multi-agency-practice-guidelines>

This guidance outlines that it is currently the responsibility of social care or the police to investigate, safeguard and protect any girls or women involved in FGM. Initially, a professional identifying a potential case of FGM will refer the potential victim as a child in need and social services will assess the risk.

New approach to FGM

Following recent campaigns the government are changing the approach to the issue of FGM.

As reported on www.gov.uk from April this year NHS hospitals will be required to record:

- 1 If a patient has had FGM
- 2 If there is a family history of FGM
- 3 If an FGM-related procedure has been carried out on a women - (deinfibulation)

By September this year, all acute hospitals must report this data centrally to the Department of Health on a monthly basis.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-government-measures-to-end-fgm>

Advice and Assistance

We would recommend that for information regarding Policies, procedures and training you approach the Trust directly.

Safeguarding alert information should be requested from either the trust or Bristol City Council safeguarding leads for children and/or adults.

Information regarding police involvement should be requested from the trust or the police as this would not be reported to us. This may have been reported to Bristol City Council as a safeguarding alert where necessary.

CQC Complaints and Internal Review procedure

We are sorry that we are unable to assist you further with your request. If you are not satisfied with our handling of your request, then you may request an internal review.

Please clearly indicate that you wish for a review to be conducted and state the reason(s) for requesting the review.

Please be aware that the review process will focus upon our handling of your request and whether CQC have complied with the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. The internal review process should not be used to raise concerns about the provision of care or the internal processes of other CQC functions.

If you are unhappy with other aspects of the CQC's actions, or of the actions of registered providers, please see our website for information on how to raise a concern or complaint:

www.cqc.org.uk/contact-us

To request a review please contact:

Legal Services & Information Rights
Care Quality Commission
Citygate
Gallowgate
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE1 4PA

E-mail: information.access@cqc.org.uk

Further rights of appeal exist to the Information Commissioner's Office under section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 once the internal appeals process has been exhausted.

The contact details are:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
SK9 5AF

Telephone Helpline: 01625 545 745
Website: www.ico.org.uk