



**Surrey and Sussex Healthcare**  
NHS Trust

***Please reply to:***

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Our ref: 6469

24 May 2021

Dear Geoff Lovell

**Freedom of information request**

I am writing in response to your request for information which has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

**Exemption cards**

If you have an age, health or disability reason for not wearing a face covering:

- you do not routinely need to show any written evidence of this
- you do not need show an exemption card

This means that you do not need to seek advice or request a letter from a medical professional about your reason for not wearing a face covering.

However, some people may feel more comfortable showing something that says they do not have to wear a face covering. This could be in the form of an exemption card, badge or even a home-made sign.

Carrying an exemption card or badge is a personal choice and is not required by law.

1. Why do SASH not mention mask wearing exemptions on your website? This information is published on the following page of our website:

<https://surreyandsussex.nhs.uk/patients-visitors/coming-to-our-hospitals-during-coronavirus/>

2. Are staff made aware of the exemption clause? Staff have been kept up to date with regular communications regarding Covid and provided with a link to the government website on the same page mentioned in question 1.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-to-wear-and-make-a-cloth-face-covering>

3. Why is there no visiting on wards? This information is published on the following page of our website: <https://surreyandsussex.nhs.uk/patients-visitors/visiting-our-services/>

4. Why are family members allowed to remain with customers in A&E? One family member is allowed to stay with the patient in the ED for many reasons:

- It can be a very unfamiliar place to be
- Generally people are at their sickest when they come into the ED so need that support
- Collateral history
- Transport home
- Information sharing with family members that are at home
- The main reason is to administer support to the patient in a potentially frightening environment

My also add that it is still social distanced and we discourage any movement around the department and allocation of only one member of family in the department unless it is a bereavement

5. How many covid patients have there been this year, by month?

	Admission by month 2021			
	January	February	March	April
Covid positive	826	255	69	11
Covid not identified but treated as covid	16	7	4	1
Total	842	262	73	12

6. When will SASH review security arrangements and visitor restrictions bearing in mind the dramatic decrease in covid customers and admissions locally and nationally?

SASH is currently reviewing its visitor arrangements (late May 2021) with a view to reducing restrictions soonest, but that is subject to central advice from government. There will be a need to maintain infection prevention and control measures to protect against infection being brought into the hospital and then within the hospital. That is very important as we pass through the current moment (May to June 2021 - where vaccinations are not covering the whole population and new Covid strains are becoming prevalent) and to provide assurance for patients using the hospital. Our security arrangements depend on several factors, including incidents within the hospital and are not solely reliant only on the visiting.

I hope this information is helpful, but if you are unhappy with our response, or the way in which your request has been handled, you may request an independent internal review. This would be undertaken by an appropriate senior member of staff at the Trust, who

were not involved in dealing with your original request. We aim to deal with internal reviews within 20 working days following receipt. If you wish to request one, please set out your grounds for asking for the review in writing and send it by post or email:

By post: Please address your letter to “Freedom of Information – Information Access Appeal” and send it to our address as shown on this letter.

By Email: Emails should be clearly marked ‘Information access appeal’ and sent to: [sash.foi@nhs.net](mailto:sash.foi@nhs.net).

Should you remain dissatisfied following an internal review, you would have the right to appeal to the Information Commissioner’s Office (ICO). However, I should point out that under section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act, you are obliged to exhaust the Trust’s own internal review process before appealing to the ICO. The ICO’s contact details are:

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

Tel: 0303 123 1113  
<http://ico.org.uk>

We would also welcome your feedback on how well we met your expectations in handling your FOIA request. If you have a couple of minutes, please click on this [link](#) to complete our Freedom of Information Customer Satisfaction Survey and let us know about your experience. The survey is anonymous – unless you choose to provide your reference number.

Please contact me, quoting our reference, if you have any queries concerning this letter and I will be happy to help.

Yours sincerely

Jeanette Randall  
FOI Officer