

Freedom of Information Act 2000

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.

What information can I obtain?

You will be able to obtain information about the business processes of the Trust. We have already made some of the corporate information we produce available on our website and through our Publication Scheme, which can be found at www.buckshealthcare.nhs.uk. This Scheme contains a guide to the types of information we have already made available or intend to make available in the near future.

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 this allows anyone to request any information held by the Trust, subject to certain exemptions listed in the Act.

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. 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 are therefore making sure that the majority of corporate information we produce 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 a description of the information about our Trust, which we make publicly available. 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. However, if you feel there is information that could usefully be added to the Scheme that we have missed, please feel free to contact us at 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 Trust is Mr Bruce James.

You may obtain access to your own health records under the Data Protection Act 1988. See our leaflet on You and Your Medical Record available on our website at www.buckshealthcare.nhs.uk

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. Additionally from January 2005, requests for information not contained within the Publication Scheme will be permitted and it is likely that a charge will be made for the supply of this information, in accordance with the fees regulations issued by the Government.

How do I get access to information not contained with 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 Publication Scheme and Other Documents

They can be found on our website at:

www.buckshealthcare.nhs.uk

A copy of the Scheme can be obtained from the following address:

Freedom of Information Lead
Buckinghamshire Hospitals NHS Trust
Trust Headquarters
Amersham Hospital
Whielden Street
Amersham, Bucks HP7 0JD

Tel: 01494 734849

Email:

xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx.xxx@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx.xxx.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 the Freedom of Information Lead at the above address.

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 545700

Fax: 01625 524510

Email: xxxx@xxx.xxx.xxx.xx

Further Information

The following websites relate to the Freedom of Information Act 2000:

Department of Constitutional Affairs:

www.dca.gov.uk

Campaign for Freedom of Information Act:

www.cfoi.org

National Archives:

www.nationalarchives.gov.uk

www.hmso.gov.uk/guides.htm

Freedom of Information Act 2000:

www.legislation.hmso.gov.uk/acts/acts2000/20000036.htm

INFORMATION

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