

3 June 2011

Our ref: IAT/F11/3596/JM

General
Medical
Council

Ms Liz Robillard

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Dear Ms Robillard

Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) appeal

Please accept my sincere apologies for the substantial delay in responding to your appeal.

In your original request, sent on 20 February 2011, you requested details of what "the procedure is now for children who were diagnosed as having inflammatory bowel disease or 'autistic gut' or LNH3/Lymphoid Nodular Hyperplasia Grade 3". In addition you asked "how many learning-disabled or autistic children have been noted to suffer from bowel disorders in the last 10 years that have come to your attention in any form?"

In her response sent on 4 March 2011 my colleague Janet Mauldridge confirmed that she had been unable to identify any information held by the GMC that would answer your first question. In relation to the number of children with bowel disorders brought to our attention in the last 10 years, Ms Mauldridge applied the costs limits exemption at Section 12 of the FOIA.

I have carefully reviewed this matter and, in particular, considered the transcript of the Fitness to Practise Panel hearing which took place regarding the activities of Dr Wakefield, Dr Murch and Professor Walker-Smith. In your original request you asked for details of the procedure for children diagnosed with inflammatory bowel disease or 'autistic gut', or LNH3/Lymphoid Nodular Hyperplasia Grade 3. In addition to the searches carried out by my colleague Janet Mauldridge I have carried out searches on "LNH3/Lymphoid Nodular Hyperplasia Grade 3". As you would expect, I have identified references to this disease within the transcripts of the Fitness to Practise Panel hearing in respect of Dr Andrew Wakefield. However these references do not relate to "details of the procedure" and, consequently, I am in agreement with Janet Mauldridge's original response confirming that we do not hold the information you have requested. I am happy to provide you with copies of the transcript references if that would be of assistance to you.

In terms of your question about learning-disabled or autistic children suffering from bowel disorders brought to the GMC's attention in the last ten years. I can confirm that we do not record complaints brought to our attention in this way. I agree with Janet Mauldridge's response dated 4 March 2011 in terms of us needing to review all complaints made. I believe that her use of the costs exemption at section 12 of the FOIA is legitimate.

Should you remain dissatisfied with my response on this matter you do have a further right of complaint to the Information Commissioner's Office, the regulator of the DPA and the FOIA. Their contact details are as follows:

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

Tel. no: 0303 123 1113
Email: mail@ico.gsi.gov.uk

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Julian Graves', with a large, loopy flourish extending from the end.

Julian Graves
Information Access Manager
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Email: jgraves@gmc-uk.org