

1. Please advise how each Trust meets the National Safety Standards for invasive procedures? When was this introduced in each trust? Who signed this off?

RESPONSE: When invasive procedures are being performed, the Trust staff adhere to strict aseptic technique. Aseptic non-touch technique (ANTT) principles are also applied before and during after any procedure, and when deemed appropriate by the health care practitioner.

2. With regards to the Royal College of Physicians;

(I) How many of Dr Watts patients' case files were sent to the RCP in total in 2016/2017? Please provide a detailed list of the dates and numbers that were sent?

RESPONSE: 48 patient's neurology medical records were forwarded to the Royal College of Physicians on 14 September 2017.

(II) Please categorise these by blood patches, epilepsy, ms etc.

RESPONSE: Multiple Sclerosis cases = 12,
Headache cases = 13,
General Neurology cases = 23

(III) How many of the patients, who case files were referred to the RCP, received a letter in 2017 to advise them of this?

RESPONSE: 48 patients were informed that their medical records were being reviewed by the RCP.

(IV) What is the total number of letters that were sent in 2017 to advise patients of the RCP investigation?

RESPONSE: 48 patients were advised that their records were reviewed a part of the RCP review of medical records.

(V) Please detail who assessed these case files to be sent to the RCP?

RESPONSE: The files sent to the RCP were a random sample selection within defined set of diagnoses.

(VI) Was an interim report provided?

RESPONSE: Yes; an interim report was provided. This is confidential and we are unable to share this with you.

3. Please provide the following;

(I) A breakdown of "never events" that have been recorded in the past 10 years to current date. How many of Dr Watts patients have been recorded as never events? Please include patients from the Recall process including those in the new 1044 recall process.

RESPONSE: The Belfast Trust does not have any records of any 'never events' associated with any Consultant Neurologist or with the Neurology Recall.

(II) Please outline the role and function of the research team.

RESPONSE: The Neurology Service does not have a research team.

(III) **Please provide all reports from the research team over the past 7 years.**

RESPONSE: The Neurology Service does not have a research team.

(IV) **Please provide details of the purpose and function of the incident control team.**

RESPONSE: The Neurology Service does not have an incident control team.

(V) **Please provide all reports from the incident control team over the past 7 years.**

RESPONSE: The Neurology Service does not have an incident control team.

(VI) **Please provide all Learned lessons reports in the last 10 years.**

RESPONSE: We estimate that compliance with this request for information would exceed the appropriate costs limit. Under Section 12 of the Freedom of Information 2000, the limit has been specified as £450 and represents the estimated cost of one or more persons spending 18 hours in determining whether we hold the information, locating, retrieving and extracting this information.

(VII) **Please provide a detailed list of all clinical trials within the Belfast Trust over the past 10 years. How many of these were referred to the REC?**

RESPONSE: We estimate that compliance with this request for information would exceed the appropriate costs limit. Under Section 12 of the Freedom of Information 2000, the limit has been specified as £450 and represents the estimated cost of one or more persons spending 18 hours in determining whether we hold the information, locating, retrieving and extracting this information.

4. **Please provide all correspondence to the Department of Health within the last 5 years.**

RESPONSE: Under section 36 of Freedom of Information Act 2000, Belfast Trust considers that responding to your question regarding correspondence with the Department of Health may prejudice the effective conduct of public affairs in relation to the Neurology Service recall so is unable to make a response at this time.

5. **With reference to the internal investigations into Dr Watt;**

Belfast Trust response for (I) to (V) below: The information requested is exempt under the Freedom of Information Act section 30: Investigations and proceedings conducted by public authorities. Information held by a public authority is exempt information if it has at any time been held by the authority for the purposes of any investigation which the public authority has a duty to conduct with a view to it being ascertained whether a person should be charged with an offence.

(I) What was the Role of Mark Mitchelson in these investigations? What date did his services begin?

(II) *What was the role of Dr Craig and Dr McDonnell in the investigations into Dr Watt? What date did their services begin?*

(III) What was the role of Dr Peukert in these investigations? What date did he first raise concerns into Dr Watt? What date did Dr Peukert begin the investigation into Dr Watt? Has Dr Peukert ever raised concerns about Dr Watt previously?

(IV) Is Mark Mitchelson, Dr Craig, Dr McDonnell or Dr Peukert involved in any investigations since the recall?

(V) Who were the external experts who reviewed the case notes for blood patch patients and what date were they appointed? Were patients informed?

6. **Further to the blood patches;**

(I) **Redacting any personal information, please outline the concerns of the 'whistleblower' GP that he raised with the Trust in Oct/Nov 2016 and again in Dec 16 regarding the blood patch patients.**

RESPONSE: The information requested is exempt under the Freedom of Information Act section 30: Investigations and proceedings conducted by public authorities. Information held by a public authority is exempt information if it has at any time been held by the authority for the purposes of any investigation which the public authority has a duty to conduct with a view to it being ascertained whether a person should be charged with an offence.

(II) **You have advised that 74 blood patch patients sought medical attention through A&E. Please also advise if any of those patients received care through ICU.**

RESPONSE: 74 patients did not seek medical attention through the Emergency Department.

(III) **What provisions were previously made to protect blood patch patients who had already undergone the procedure from when concerns were first raised?**

RESPONSE: Patients who experienced any unusual symptoms following an epidural blood patch procedure would have been recommended to attend either their General Practitioner or their local Emergency Department for advice and support.

(IV) **What provisions are currently in place to protect blood patch patients who have already undergone blood patches?**

RESPONSE: Any patient who has had a blood patch procedure and is currently experiencing any unusual symptoms should contact their General Practitioner for advice and support. There are patients who were on Dr Watt's active caseload, who had an epidural blood patch. These patients were reviewed as part of the Neurology Recall.

(V) **Are any clinicians currently providing blood patches? How is the safety of those patients assured? What advice will be provided to those patients who will need a blood patch?**

RESPONSE: Consultant Anaesthetists within the Belfast Trust currently perform epidural blood patch procedures. The procedure is explained to patients and an information leaflet is available.

7. **You have stated that those most at risk were seen during the first 6 weeks of the recall.**

(I) **How were those patients identified & when?**

RESPONSE: Patients were identified as higher risk depending on either their diagnosis or medication that they were taking. Patients taking first and second line disease modifying therapies, immunotherapies, patients with Myasthenia Gravis and Motor Neurone Disease were all prioritised for the Neurology Recall.

(II) **Who decided these patients were at risk & why?**

RESPONSE: The Trust made the decision regarding the risk stratification based on the patient's medical diagnosis and the medication that they were taking.

(III) **How were the patients identified for the second recall? How were they prioritised?**

RESPONSE: The decision regarding patients for the second recall was based on the medication that they were taking. The patients were prioritised in terms of their medication, but not in terms of the availability of appointment dates.

8. With reference to Dr Watt

Belfast Trust response for (I) to (VII) below: The information requested is exempt under the Freedom of Information Act section 30: Investigations and proceedings conducted by public authorities. Information held by a public authority is exempt information if it has at any time been held by the authority for the purposes of any investigation which the public authority has a duty to conduct with a view to it being ascertained whether a person should be charged with an offence.

- (I) Please provide a detailed list of restrictions imposed on Dr Watt by the Trust and provide the dates that these restrictions were implemented.
- (II) What date was Dr Watts general neurology last extended? By whom?
- (III) What date was Dr Watts first and last blood patch?
- (IV) Please detail what prompted Dr Watts removal from duties in June 17 when it was agreed that current restrictions ensured patient safety?
- (V) Is Dr Watt on Full/Partial pay?
- (VI) Other than Dr Watt, have any other members received disciplinary action of any description?
- (VII) Other than the recall, have any of Dr Watts patients ever been a part of any other investigations/reviews? Please detail.

9. Did the Trust, at any time from 2015, involve patients GP's in any of the processes? Please detail.

RESPONSE: At the outset of the Neurology Recall a letter was sent to all General Practitioners advising them of the Recall. General Practitioners also received a copy of each individual letter sent to each patient. A specific General Practitioner helpline was also made available to support each General Practitioner.

10. You previously advised that the PTU was a suitable aseptic location for epidural blood patching;

- (I) **Please provide a detailed list of all actions and associated costs that were taken to make the department aseptic since it closed as a functioning A&E department?**

RESPONSE: The department is not made aseptic. Procedures are carried out using an aseptic technique and the principles of aseptic non-touch technique (ANTT).

- (II) **Please provide a cleaning rota for the old A&E department/PTU for the past 5 years.**

RESPONSE: We estimate that compliance with this request for information would exceed the appropriate costs limit. Under Section 12 of the Freedom of Information 2000, the limit has been specified as £450 and represents the estimated cost of one or more persons spending 18 hours in determining whether we hold the information, locating, retrieving and extracting this information.

- (III) **Please provide a detailed list of any works that has been carried out in this department over the past 5 years. I.e Painting, cleaning, new curtains/flooring etc Please provide dates and costs?**

RESPONSE: We estimate that compliance with this request for information would exceed the appropriate costs limit. Under Section 12 of the Freedom of Information 2000, the limit has been specified as £450 and represents the estimated cost of one or more persons spending 18 hours in determining whether we hold the information, locating, retrieving and extracting this information.

11. Please provide a list of all FOI requests put to the Belfast Trust regarding Dr Watt in the year prior to Recall announcement up until current date. Please provide a copy of these with answers. Please also provide FOI's which were not responded to.

RESPONSE: Please find attached. Please note these documents have been redacted in accordance with the FOI Act 2000 under Section 40(2): Personal information relating to a third party. This is deemed to be sensitive personal information about another individual. Disclosure would breach one or more of the principles of the General Data Protection Regulations 2018

12. Please provide a detailed list of all software used within the Belfast Trust. Please include it's function & running costs.

RESPONSE (following clarification on software relating to Health Records): Medical Records are held on the PAS system. This can provide audit trails of up to 2 years. Running costs are not held by Belfast Trust, but by BSO. Business Services Organisation (BSO) Headquarters, 2 Franklin Street, Belfast BT2 8DQ Tel: 030 0555 0113