

12 October 2018

Colin Iain Campbell MBChB FRSPH

By email

request-520032-a89e6908@whatdotheyknow.com

Dear Dr Campbell

Request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the “FOI Act”)

We refer to your email of 15 September 2018 in which you requested information under the FOI Act from NHS Improvement. Since 1 April 2016, Monitor and the NHS Trust Development Authority have been operating as an integrated organisation known as NHS Improvement. For the purposes of this decision, NHS Improvement means Monitor and the TDA.

Your request

You made the following request:

“I have a number of what should be easy to answer simple questions which your IT team - or those processing the stats should be able to respond to quickly. The following questions relate to how the information from Weekly/Monthly collections from hospitals is stored, submitted and processed.

- 1) *Is the website portal the only method of uploading? or simply the preferred one? If it is only the preferred one what alternative methods are there. Please supply any email address used if this is offered as a means of submitting. (website <https://datacollections.improvement.nhs.uk/NHSIDataCollections/>)*
- 2) *How many hospitals are on Weekly submissions, and how many are on monthly? (if easily held).*
- 3) *How does the website store the data? eg MySQL database, CSV? Sync with an offline excel spreadsheet? Please specify the storage format(s) used.*
- 4) *If stored on the webserver (eg MySQL database) Does the data persist on the webserver after export? Or is it removed after a local copy is created (or is no local file created?).*
- 5) *Does the coding of the website on the NHS Improvement side show the analytics you usually require automatically? Or is data exported to a spreadsheet to work with before any analytics are shown? If analytics are shown on the website please provide a screenshot.*
- 6) *Is there an export function from the webpage? Does this export the full database or can a time interval be specified?*

- 7) *In what format is the information provided to management within NHS Improvement to support management decisions?*
- 8) *Which department within NHS Improvement undertakes this work? (unless the analytics are all on the website?).*
- 9) *Which software packages does the IT department use to interact with and debug the website including the database?"*

Decision

NHS Improvement holds the information that you have requested and has decided to release some of the information it holds.

Some of the information is being withheld under section 31 of the FOI Act as explained in detail below. NHS Improvement will address each question in turn.

Question 1

Yes, we only accept submissions via the portal.

Question 2

All trusts are on weekly submissions for key data.

Question 3

We consider this information to be exempt under section 31(1)(a) of the FOI Act. Section 31(1)(a) of FOI Act states that information is exempt from disclosure if its disclosure would, or would be likely to, prejudice the prevention or detection of crime.

We consider disclosure of this information would be likely to prejudice the prevention of crime. The crime in question would be a cyber or malicious attack on the data collection portal. Release of this information would be likely to be prejudicial to the prevention of a crime by providing information hackers with information which would could be used to focus an attack, thus facilitating the possibility of a criminal offence of hacking without consent. For example, by disclosing whether the site allows an export function will disclose a potential cyber attack vector, whereby if an attacker knows the site has the function to export data, they will target this in order to steal the data. Placing this information in the public domain could endanger the IT security of NHS Improvement.

Whilst we recognise the public interest in the disclosure of this information for the sake of transparency and openness, we also have to take into account the potential harm that could be done to NHS Improvement from disclosure. We consider there to be an overwhelming public interest in keeping government computer systems secure; including protecting personal data. For these reasons, we consider that the public interest favours maintaining the exemption.

Question 4

See response to question 3.

Question 5

See response to question 3.

Question 6

See response to question 3.

Question 7

Microsoft PowerPoint or PDF.

Question 8

Agency Team.

Question 9

See response to question 3.

Review rights

If you consider that your request for information has not been properly handled or if you are otherwise dissatisfied with the outcome of your request, you can try to resolve this informally with the person who dealt with your request. If you remain dissatisfied, you may seek an internal review within NHS Improvement of the issue or the decision. A senior member of NHS Improvement's staff, who has not previously been involved with your request, will undertake that review.

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of any internal review, you may complain to the Information Commissioner for a decision on whether your request for information has been dealt with in accordance with the FOI Act.

A request for an internal review should be submitted in writing to FOI Request Reviews, NHS Improvement, Wellington House, 133-155 Waterloo Road, London SE1 8UG or by email to nhsi.foi@nhs.net.

Publication

Please note that this letter will shortly be published on our website. This is because information disclosed in accordance with the FOI Act is disclosed to the public at large. We will, of course, remove your personal information (e.g. your name and contact details) from the version of the letter published on our website to protect your personal information from general disclosure.

Yours sincerely,

NHS Improvement