

5 December 2017

**General
Medical
Council**

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Dear Ms Wild,

Your information access request - F17/9230/SW

Thank you for your email. I've considered your amended request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

You have asked :-

"For the three most recent years for which you have data, how many complaints about doctors providing clinical care to patients with a learning disability or autism have you received?"

Of these how many have proceeded to (a) the investigation stage, (b) have resulted in a warning to the doctor concerned, (c) have proceeded to a full MPTS tribunal?"

If you do not hold the data requested for question 2, please state how you are able to assess that you are complying with the Equality Act (2010) for patients with a learning disability or autism."

I can't provide the information you requested because of the amount of data you've asked for and the work that would be involved. Under the FOIA there's an exemption for requests where it would cost the public authority more than £450 to process - equivalent to two and half days' work.

The cost of your request

To estimate the cost we can take into account determining, locating, retrieving and extracting the information requested.

In order to process your request, we would need to identify clinical information about patients who were treated by the doctor being complained about. Complaints

data we hold are not stored in a way which could extract this information electronically. We would need to manually check through the details of each record to confirm if it's within the scope of your request.

In 2015 alone, we received over 8,000 complaints about doctors and it would take around 20 minutes to check through each record. Based on an hourly rate of £25 per hour (which is set by the *Freedom of Information (Fees and Appropriate Limit) Regulations 2004*) this would cost us significantly in excess of the 'appropriate limit' to process a part of your request.

The exemption

Under the FOIA, the specific exemption which we believe applies is at section 12. This states that we are not required to comply with a request if we estimate that the cost of doing so would exceed the appropriate limit.

Your right to appeal

I'm sorry I couldn't provide the information you requested. You can appeal against this decision to Elizabeth Hiley, Information Access Manager. If you want to appeal, please set out your reasons and reply to this email. You can also appeal to the Information Commissioner, the regulator of the FOIA and DPA – we can provide more details about this if you need them.

Yours sincerely

Simon Willis
Information Access Officer
Resources & Quality Assurance Directorate