

10<sup>th</sup> November 2017

**Joan Corrigan**  
[request-443528-04b31a2e@whatdotheyknow.com]

Our ref.: FOI/17/383

**Dear Ms Corrigan**

**RE: Freedom of Information (FOI) request – WHSCT Complaints protocol**

We acknowledge receipt of your email and information request which was received by the Western Health and Social Care Trust on 6th November 2017.

You stated that your email was '*in relation to WHSCT and complaints made to their complaints dept.*'

You have a right under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to request a copy of any 'recorded information' held by the Trust and this will be provided to you unless it is exempt from release under the Act. Your request can be in the form of a question, but the Trust does not have to answer any question that would mean creating new information or giving an opinion, comment or judgment that is not already recorded or held in a document. In addition, under the FOI Act we cannot provide any information or comment that would in any way relate to you personally.

Please see below a Trust response under the FOI Act to your various questions.

- 1. Why would anyone who wants to make general comments, suggestions, queries, requests to various Trust staff who are responsible for the areas s/he is engaging about- be asked to direct all her contact via the complaints dept. (Sept 2017)***

This is a request for comment or opinion which does not require a response under the FOI Act.

- 2. If someone wants to engage with a Trust staff member, using her PPI rights (2009 social reform act) why would they also be directed to the complaints dept?**

This is a request for comment or opinion which does not require a response under the FOI Act.

- 3. When a complaint is received by the WHSCT complaints team, please outline the generic investigation process from start to finish i.e. who it goes to (not people's names but their job status), everyone who sees it before it is signed off, if it is seen by lawyers and under what grounds is it seen by lawyers.**

In response, we would refer you to information available in the Trust Complaints Policy which is available on the Western Trust website: [www.westeritrust.hscni.net](http://www.westeritrust.hscni.net). You will find the Trust Policies under the tab entitled "About the Trust" and under the heading "Corporate Information".

- 4. If staff's directors are investigating their own staff- how is impartiality maintained?**

In response, we would refer you to information available in the Trust Complaints Policy which is available on the Western Trust website: [www.westeritrust.hscni.net](http://www.westeritrust.hscni.net). You will find the Trust Policies under the tab entitled "About the Trust" and under the heading "Corporate Information".

- 5. Of the five, at least complaints I have made over the past 10 years, none of those have been upheld by WHSCT, in other words, they have defended their own staff and their own conduct in every SINGLE point I made. Is that a culture? and a directed policy of 'accept no responsibility?'**

This is a request for comment or opinion which does not require a response under the FOI Act.

- 6. Do the Trust engage with the complainant after the complaint has been exhausted, to see what learning can be achieved, and if not, why not? (Please outline how the Trust tries to learn)**

In response, we would refer you to information available in the Trust Complaints Policy which is available on the Western Trust website: [www.westeritrust.hscni.net](http://www.westeritrust.hscni.net). You will find the Trust Policies under the tab entitled "About the Trust" and under the heading "Corporate Information".

**7. Can The Trust state how many (in %) of all its complaints received in the last 12 months have been upheld and how many have been dismissed i.e. WHSCT's conduct upheld? If that is not recorded, how can the complaints dept's efficacy be monitored and how can Trust leaning bias be monitored?**

This information is not available as the Trust does not apply "upheld" / "dismissed" criteria.

With regards to monitoring of the complaints process, we would refer you to the Health and Social Care Board (HSCB) Complaints Policy which is available on the HSCB website at the following link:

<http://www.hscboard.hscni.net/download/PUBLICATIONS/COMPLAINTS/HSCB-Policy-for-the-management-of-complaints-October-2017.pdf>

We hope you find this response helpful.

Yours sincerely

(not signed – issued by email)

**Freedom of Information Office  
Western Health and Social Care Trust**

*Freedom of Information: If you are unhappy as to how this request has been handled, you have the right to seek a review within the Trust in the first instance. You should write to the FOI Office, Administration Building, Altnagelvin Hospital, Glenshane Road, Londonderry BT47 6SB ([foi.request@westerntrust.hscni.net](mailto:foi.request@westerntrust.hscni.net)) within two months of the date of this response and your complaint will be considered and a response provided, usually within 20 working days of receipt.*

*If, after receiving a response, you remain unhappy, you can refer your complaint to the Information Commissioner at The Information Commissioner's office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF. It is important to note that if you refer any matter to the Information Commissioner, you will need to show evidence of having gone through the Trust's internal review procedure to try to resolve the matter with the Trust in the first instance.*

Freedom of Information (FOI) Office, Administration Building,  
Altnagelvin Hospital site, Glenshane Road, Londonderry, BT47 6SB  
e-mail: [foi.request@westerntrust.hscni.net](mailto:foi.request@westerntrust.hscni.net)