

**Freedom of Information Request****Ref: UHB 17-426**

Date 11 August 2017

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Thank you for your request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. The Trusts response is as follows:

- 1. Does your trust use an electronic system to make and/or keep track of neurosurgical referrals?**

Yes

- 2. If so, what software/database is used to record details of neurosurgical referrals in your trust? What software version?**

The Trust uses an internal Microsoft Access database.

- 3. Since when has this software/database been used in your trust?**

This database has been used since the service started in UHBristol in May 2015.

- 4. How many referrals were made/captured using this software in each of the 2015 and 2016 calendar years**

2015 – 876

2016 - 743

- 5. What is the cost of this software/database, in terms of upfront purchase and/or annual licensing costs? Please provide the latest figures available, e.g., for calendar year 2016.**

£0

- 6. What is the annual technical support cost of this software/database (if not included in the figures provided in response to question 5)**

£0

- 7. Please provide the latest figures available, e.g., for calendar year 2016.**

£0

**8. Please provide a list of each of the current data entry fields implemented within the software/database?**

Under **Section 31(1)(a)** of the Freedom of Information Act, we are required to judge as to whether the disclosure of the information would, or would be likely to, prejudice the prevention or detection of crime. Under guidance issued by the Information Commissioner states that this exemption applies if disclosure of the withheld information would, or would be likely to prejudice the prevention of criminal acts in relation to the Trust's computer systems and information, such as hacking, theft of data, misuse of confidential data or the disruption of the Trust's operations.

**9. When is the end-date for the current software/database license or contract agreement?**

Not applicable

**10. Does the trust own the software/database?**

Yes

**11. Did the trust develop the software/database in house? If not, who developed this?**

Yes

**12. Who is the trust's clinical contact point for discussion related to this software/database?**

We do not currently have a clinical contact point.

**13. What security standards does this software/database meet?**

The database seems our internal Information Governance standards.

**14. Does a security management strategy exist for this database? When was this last updated? Please provide a copy of any related documents.**

Please find a copy of the Trust's internal standards to adhere to attached.

### **Public interest arguments in favour of disclosing the withheld information.**

The Trust is aware of the presumption of openness and transparency running through the Freedom of Information Act, and that public authorities should be accountable to the public for their actions and decision-making processes, as public funds are involved.

The Trust also considers that there is a public interest in knowing that it manages data responsibly and securely.

### **Public interest factors in favour of maintaining the exemption**

The Trust believes that the public interest arguments in favour of withholding the small amount of information are compelling. There is a strong public interest in the highest standards of information compliance being maintained in all public sector organisations; and in particular the secure maintenance of personal and other sensitive data. The Trust considers that disclosure of the information would be likely to prejudice the maintenance of its IT security is clearly contrary to the public interest.

### **Balance of the public interest arguments**

The Trust considers that there is a strong public interest in openness and transparency of public authorities. There would be a significant public interest in knowing that the Trust manages data responsibly and securely, particularly since it holds a great deal of confidential and valuable data.

The Trust does not believe that there is any compelling public interest in knowing each of the current data entry fields implemented within the software/database as these are potentially vulnerable pieces of information, which would outweigh the public interest in the Trust's secure maintenance of sensitive and confidential data. University Hospitals Bristol NHS Trust accepts that there is a strong public interest in maintaining the security of confidential data and not increasing the vulnerability of the security systems to criminal activity.

The Trust has carefully considered all public interest arguments both in favour of disclosure and of maintaining the exemption. We have considered that it is vitally important to protect the security of our systems against criminal or malicious attack and that there is an extremely compelling interest in doing so. We do not believe that this is outweighed by the arguments in favour of openness and transparency in public sector organisations.

The Trust considers that the public interest in maintaining the exemption in all of the circumstances of this case outweighs that in disclosure of the withheld information. Under guidance from the Freedom of Information Act, the Trust has therefore decided to withhold the requested information.

This concludes our response. We trust that you find this helpful, but please do not hesitate to contact us directly if we can be of any further assistance.

If, after that, you are dissatisfied with the handling of your request, you have the right to ask for an internal review. Internal review requests should be submitted within two months of the date of receipt of the response to your original letter and should be addressed to:

Trust Secretary  
University Hospitals Bristol NHS Foundation Trust  
Trust Headquarters  
Marlborough Street  
Bristol  
BS1 3NU

Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF

To view the Freedom of Information Act in full please click [here](#).

Yours sincerely,

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