

## **Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA)**

### **Decision notice**

**Date:** 24 November 2021

**Public Authority:** Norfolk and Norwich University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

**Address:** Colney Lane  
Norwich  
NR4 7UY

#### **Decision (including any steps ordered)**

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1. The complainant requested from Norfolk and Norwich University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust ("the Trust") information relating to its spending on services for the deaf and blind. By the date of this notice the Trust had not issued a substantive response to this request.
2. The Commissioner's decision is that the Trust has breached section 10(1) of the FOIA in that it failed to provide a valid response to the request within the statutory time frame of 20 working days.
3. The Commissioner requires the Trust to take the following step to ensure compliance with the legislation.
  - The Trust must provide a substantive response to the request in accordance with its obligations under the FOIA.
4. The Trust must take this step within 35 calendar days of the date of this decision notice. Failure to comply may result in the Commissioner making written certification of this fact to the High Court pursuant to section 54 of the Act and may be dealt with as a contempt of court.

## Request and response

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5. On 1 August 2021, the complainant wrote to the Trust and requested information in the following terms:

*"I would like to make a request under the Freedom of Information Act regarding the following:*

*What was the spending per financial year on services for the deaf and blind – such as British Sign Language (BSL) and Braille – for your organisation in each of the following financial years:*

*2015/2016*

*2016/2017*

*2017/2018*

*2018/2019*

*2019/2020*

*Background: This data, combined with the data previously requested, will give a complete picture of the spending on translation and interpreting services on foreign languages and on services for the deaf and blind that facilitates the communication between patients and medical professionals. I am carrying out this research UK-wide and the data obtained from your organisation and from all the NHS Trusts and organisations will be compiled, analysed and published on [link redacted] so it will be available to the general public on a non-commercial basis for anyone interested in this information.*

*If there is anything unclear in my request, you cannot send the data as requested or would like more information, please let me know."*

6. The Trust wrote to the complainant on 11 August 2021 to acknowledge the request. By the date of this notice, the Trust has not provided the complainant with a substantive response to her request.

## Scope of the case

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7. The complainant contacted the Commissioner on 2 November 2021 to complain about the Trust's failure to respond to their request.
8. The Commissioner has considered whether the Trust has complied with its obligations in relation to the time for compliance at section 10(1) of the FOIA.

## Reasons for decision

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9. Section 1(1) of the FOIA states that:

*"Any person making a request for information to a public authority is entitled –*

*(a) to be informed in writing by the public authority whether it holds information of the description specified in the request, and*

*(b) if that is the case, to have that information communicated to him."*

10. Section 10(1) of the FOIA states that a public authority must respond to a request promptly and *"not later than the twentieth working day following the date of receipt"*.

11. On 8 November 2021 the Commissioner wrote to the Trust, reminding it of its responsibilities and asking it to provide a substantive response to the complainant's request within 10 working days.

12. Despite this intervention the Trust has failed to respond to the complainant.

13. From the evidence provided to the Commissioner in this case, it is clear that the Trust did not deal with the request for information in accordance with the FOIA. The Commissioner finds that the Trust has breached section 10(1) by failing to respond to the request within 20 working days and it is now required to respond to the request in accordance with the FOIA.

## Right of appeal

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14. Either party has the right to appeal against this decision notice to the First-tier Tribunal (Information Rights). Information about the appeals process may be obtained from:

First-tier Tribunal (Information Rights)  
GRC & GRP Tribunals,  
PO Box 9300,  
LEICESTER,  
LE1 8DJ

Tel: 0203 936 8963

Fax: 0870 739 5836

Email: [grc@justice.gov.uk](mailto:grc@justice.gov.uk)

Website: [www.justice.gov.uk/tribunals/general-regulatory-chamber](http://www.justice.gov.uk/tribunals/general-regulatory-chamber)

15. If you wish to appeal against a decision notice, you can obtain information on how to appeal along with the relevant forms from the Information Tribunal website.
16. Any Notice of Appeal should be served on the Tribunal within 28 (calendar) days of the date on which this decision notice is sent.

**Signed .....**

**Michael Lea**  
**Team Manager**  
**Information Commissioner's Office**  
**Wycliffe House**  
**Water Lane**  
**Wilmslow**  
**Cheshire**  
**SK9 5AF**