

What is the Freedom of Information Act 2000?

The Freedom of Information Act was passed on the 30th November 2000 and came into force on the 1st January 2005.

It aims to promote a culture of openness and accountability in the public sector, by providing people with a general right of access to all types of recorded information held by public authorities.

The Act replaces the Open Government Code of Practice which has been in operation since 1994.

Who is covered by the Act?

The Act applies to all public authorities. This includes government departments, local authorities, NHS bodies, schools, colleges and universities, and the police, House of Commons and House of Lords.

What does it mean for Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust?

- The Act affects everyone in the Trust
- There is a statutory duty to implement the Act
- It allows anyone to find out whether information is held, and if it is, to have access to it
- There are no time limits on how far back someone can gain access to information, it is as far back as we hold the information

What is publication scheme?

The Trust is required to routinely publish certain information under the publication scheme. As a result of the Publication Scheme Development and Maintenance Initiative the Information Commissioner's Office has introduced a model publication scheme that all public sector organisations should adopt from 1 January 2009. Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust is committed to complying with the model publication scheme.

A publication scheme specifies:

- Classes of information that the Trust publishes or intends to publish
- Whether a fee will be charged for that information

You can find out what information we make routinely available under our Publication scheme

You may first wish to search the Trust website to find out if the information you require has already been published before requesting information under the Freedom of Information Act general rights of access.

How to request information under the Freedom of Information general rights of access

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust is committed to providing timely and accessible information to the public and responding to reasonable requests for information.

Your request for information must be in writing, include a name and address for correspondence (email address is also acceptable) and describe the information that you are requesting, giving us enough detail about the information in order to allow us to correctly identify and find it.

You may find it useful to use the Trust's Online request form.

All requests should be sent to the Trust's Data Awareness Manager (see contact details on the right hand side of this page)

Response target

The Trust's target for meeting requests for information is twenty working days. Applicants will be kept informed if any delays appear likely.

Providing advice and assistance

We have a duty to provide advice and assistance to applicants who want to make a request for information and need help in doing so. Advice and assistance is available from the Trust's

Data Awareness Manager (see contact details below) or from Patient Advice and Liaison service

Limits of disclosure

Cambridge University Hospitals will disclose information wherever possible. However, in certain limited circumstances, it will be necessary to withhold some or all of the information requested under one of the exemptions outlined in the Act. In any case where information is refused, the Trust will specify which exemption has been claimed and why. All requests for information will be carefully considered on their own merits and with close regard to the public interest.

Requests for personal data

Maintaining the right of confidentiality is an important commitment for all NHS organisations. The Data Protection Act 1998 governs the processing of personal information (information relating to living individuals). For more information go to: Data Protection

This legislation makes it possible for you to request access to personal data that the Trust may hold about you. A request for disclosure of such information is called a subject access request.

Separate arrangements for handling such requests exist, for more information go to Access to health records

Charges and fees for information

Information which is available from our website will generally be without charge.

For information requested under the Freedom of Information Act the following charges will apply:

Where the cost of the Trust responding to your request for information is calculated as being less than £450.00 (this covers the time taken to look for, find and put the information into a format that has been requested) no standard fee will be charged, but we will charge the full costs of disbursements (costs of postage and photocopying) when this exceeds £25.00.

Complying with requests for information which would exceed more than the £450 limit to respond to will be at the discretion of the Trust and may incur a fee.

Who is the Information Commissioner?

The Information Commissioner enforces and oversees the Data Protection Act 1998 and Freedom of Information Act 2000. The Commissioner is a UK independent supervisory

authority reporting directly to the UK Parliament.

The Information Commissioner

Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

Fax: 01625 524 510

Enquiry/Information Line: 01625 545 745

data@dataprotection.gov.uk

Complaints

If an applicant is not happy with how their request for information has been dealt with they should follow the Trust's normal complaint procedure.

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) can provide assistance and information to anyone wishing to make a complaint.

If an applicant is still not happy once their complaint has been dealt with by the Trust then they have the right of appeal to the Information Commissioner's Office.