

Date: Monday, 28th October 2019
Our Ref: MB/SS FOI 4070

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Re: Freedom of Information Request FOI 4070

We are writing in response to your request submitted under the Freedom of Information Act, received in this office on 14th October 2019.

Your request was as follows:

1. In the last 5 years, how many times has your trust/hospital suffered from a ransomware attack? Please provide specific dates (months/years) if possible.

The Walton Centre Foundation Trust has had 1 ransomware attack. We are unable to provide specific date as we consider that if the data you have requested were to be combined with other information which may be available in the public domain, there would likely to be an increased risk of a cyber-security attack upon the Trust.

If disclosed, such information could be used to identify ways in which our computer systems could be breached. Patient data as well as other confidential information could therefore be accessed. The Trust has a duty to protect such information in line Article 5 (1)(f) (integrity and confidentiality) of the General Data Protection Regulations.

As part of the Critical National Infrastructure for the NHS, the Trust has a duty to protect the integrity of our systems. The disclosure of the information requested could expose weaknesses in our systems and lead to breaches, making the UK or its citizens, in this case our patients, more vulnerable to security threat. As such, we consider it to be exempt under Section 36 – Prejudice to effective conduct of Public Affairs (36 (1b)(2c)) of the FOIA, which exempts information where release of the information would otherwise prejudice, or would be likely otherwise to prejudice, the effective conduct of Public Affairs.

Section 36 is a qualified exemption; therefore the public interest in withholding the information should outweigh the public interest in its disclosure.

The Trust has applied the public interest test and believes that disclosure of this information could lead to:

- Breaches in Trust security and is therefore a reasonable threat to the confidential patient data held on our systems.
- Temporary or long term lack of availability of IT systems
- Corruption/loss of patient data which would prevent or interrupt provision of patient care.

There is a strong public interest in protecting the confidentiality of patient data and of ensuring that healthcare services can be provided to the public without increasing the possibility of attack by hackers or malware, or of putting personal or other information held on these systems at risk of corruption or subject to illegal access. For these reasons, the Trust has decided that it is in the public interest to withhold this information at this time.

2. How much downtime did this cause (in hours)?

Global for the organisation in different systems only approximately 1 hour.

3. Did you pay the ransom? If so, how much was the ransom?

No

4. What was the total cost of the incident to your hospital/trust?

N/A

Please see our response above in [blue](#).

Re-Use of Public Sector Information

All information supplied by the Trust in answering a request for information (RFI) under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 will be subject to the terms of the Re-use of Public Sector Information Regulations 2005, Statutory Instrument 2005 No. 1515 which came into effect on 1st July 2005.

Under the terms of the Regulations, the Trust will licence the re-use of any or all information supplied if being used in a form and for the purpose other than which it was originally supplied. This license for re-use will be in line with the requirements of the Regulations and the licensing terms and fees as laid down by the Office of Public Sector Information (OPSI). Most licenses will be free; however the Trust reserves the right, in certain circumstances, to charge a fee for the re-use of some information which it deems to be of commercial value.

Further information can be found at www.opsi.gov.uk where a sample license terms and fees can be found with guidance on copyright and publishing notes and a Guide to Best Practice and regulated advice and case studies, at www.opsi.gov.uk/advice/psi-regulations/index.htm

If 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 the Freedom of Information Office at the address above.

Please remember to quote the reference number, FOI 4070 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 Commissioners Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF.

Yours sincerely

Mike Burns

Mr. Mike Burns, Executive Lead for Freedom of Information