

Request title: Complaints 2013 (study of)

Date of Response: 08 July

Further to your Freedom of Information request, the Trust has answered your questions in the order they appear in your request.

Request

I am writing on behalf of my colleagues at the London School of Economics (LSE). We have been studying what we can learn from the content of patient complaints. Our research indicates that letters of complaint can contain valuable information that can inform organizational learning.

Recently we published a review of how letters of complaint have been studied in the past, and we proposed a new taxonomy. You can read about this research in the *British Medical Journal: Quality & Safety* (open access link: <http://qualitysafety.bmj.com/content/early/2014/05/29/bmjqs-2013-002437.full>)

We now want to apply this new taxonomy to a national sample of letters of complaint received by NHS Acute Hospitals with the aim of developing a new and improved way of analysing patient complaints. In order to obtain this sample of letters we are making Freedom of Information requests to a national sample of such hospitals. Already, many Trusts have complied with this request.

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FOI request: We request the first 25 type-written letters of complaint that your Trust received after 1st April 2013. If your Trust contains more than one unit, we request that the letters are from across the units.

Anonymity of patient letters: The letters will contain personally identifying information, and we request that all personally identifying information be redacted from the letters (i.e., information about addresses, dates, units attended, sexuality, religion, ethnicity, age etc.). We only request information about the patient's experience of the NHS. We understand that the resultant letters may be heavily redacted.

Why we have selected your Trust: Your trust has been randomly selected. We want a national sample of letters of complaint received by NHS Acute Trusts, and your Trust is an Acute Trust.

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Anonymity of your Trust: The name of your trust, will not appear in any of our research. The letters which you provide will be aggregated with letters from other Trusts, and will in no way be traceable back to your trust. We are not interested in the identity of any particular Trust.

Reply

Further to your Freedom of Information request, the Trust can confirm that the Agency spend on AHP's during the 2014/15 financial year was £362,314.

The Trust is not able to provide a further breakdown by specialism as this level of information is not recorded centrally on its reporting systems. In order to obtain this level of data, a scanned image of each invoice would have to be checked manually to find the level of specialism (if this was included on the invoice) and then the information would need to be input onto a spread sheet. The information from that spread sheet would then need to be analysed to obtain the response. Each invoice takes around 5 minutes to locate, check and analyse. The spend figure provided above relates to a total of 298 invoices. Therefore, the time needed to check all 298 invoices to obtain the required information, would take in excess of 18 hours, which is the appropriate limit set by the Freedom of Information Act 2000. The appropriate limit of £450 represents the estimated cost of one person spending two and a half days in locating, retrieving and extracting the information. Consequently, the Trust is not obliged by the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to retrieve the above information (see section 12(1)).