

Ref. No: 0610
Date: 22/01/24
Subject: Physicians Associates

REQUEST

I am writing to make a formal request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to obtain information regarding the employment and performance of Physicians Associates (PAs) within your Trust. I would appreciate it if you could provide the following details:

1. The total number of Physicians Associates currently employed by the Trust.
2. A breakdown of the departments in which these Physicians Associates are currently working.
3. Information on whether any Physicians Associates have been assigned operating or procedural lists which they run autonomously, with distant consultant support.
4. The total number of "never events" that have occurred involving Physicians Associates within the specified timeframe.
5. Details of any untoward incidents involving Physicians Associates, including the nature of the incidents and any outcomes or actions taken.
6. The total number of investigations conducted involving Physicians Associates, along with specific details of each investigation and their outcomes.
7. Information on whether there are any ongoing investigations involving Physicians Associates, and if so, the nature of these investigations.
8. How are patient feedback and satisfaction surveys utilised to assess the performance and impact of Physicians Associates in their respective roles within the Trust?

Please provide the information for the last 10 years. If the information is not available for the entire requested period, please provide it for the longest period possible.

RESPONSE

St Helens and Knowsley Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust and Southport and Ormskirk Hospital NHS Trust became a single legal entity known as Mersey and West Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust on 1st July 2023, as such parts of the response may be provided in two sections relating to the hospital sites of each of the legacy organisations.

1. The total number of Physicians Associates currently employed by the Trust.

Job Role	Area of Work	No. Employees
Physician Associate	A&E	10
	General Surgery	<5
	Paediatrics	<5
	Rheumatology	<5

Section 40: personal information

We are unable to provide precise figures when those figures refer to individuals in volumes of 5 or less due to the risk that individuals will be re-identified, as we are required to protect their identity under the General Data Protection Regulations & Data Protection Act 2018. In such circumstances Section 40(2) and Section 40(3) of the Freedom of Information Act apply. In this case, our view is that disclosure would breach the first data protection principle which states that personal data should be processed "lawfully, fairly and in a transparent manner". It is the lawful aspect of this principle which, in our view, would be breached by disclosure, and in such circumstances, Section 40 confers an absolute exemption on disclosure.

2. A breakdown of the departments in which these Physicians Associates are currently working.

Please see response to question one.

3. Information on whether any Physicians Associates have been assigned operating or procedural lists which they run autonomously, with distant consultant support.

None

4. The total number of "never events" that have occurred involving Physicians Associates within the specified timeframe.

None (STHK) / None (S&O)

5. Details of any untoward incidents involving Physicians Associates, including the nature of the incidents and any outcomes or actions taken.

Section 12: cost of compliance exceeds the appropriate limit

We would need to undertake a manual review of each incident reported within the requested time period to provide the information requested, which we estimate would far exceed the appropriate time limit.

Under Section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act, Mersey and West Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust does not have to comply with a request where it is estimated that the cost of compliance would exceed the appropriate limit of £450. The appropriate limit is specified within the regulations and represents the estimated cost of one person spending at least 2½ working days answering the request, either wholly or partially.

6. The total number of investigations conducted involving Physicians Associates, along with specific details of each investigation and their outcomes.

None

7. Information on whether there are any ongoing investigations involving Physicians Associates, and if so, the nature of these investigations.

None

8. How are patient feedback and satisfaction surveys utilised to assess the performance and impact of Physicians Associates in their respective roles within the Trust?

We do not collate information to this level of detail.