

Freedom of Information Act Request

I am writing to request information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

1) In the last four years, how many times has the trust triggered the Maintaining High Professional Standards (MHPS) procedure and opened an MHPS case?

How many doctors have been affected by these MHPS cases in these four years?

*Answer: In the last four years, the Trust has triggered and opened **16** MHPS cases for **15** doctors (out of the 16 cases, 4 remain open and ongoing).*

2) In the last four years, how many episodes of exclusion of trust doctors have taken place under MHPS?

Please give the (a) range of duration and (b) average duration of these episodes of exclusion, in the last four years

The Trust is unable to provide this information as the numbers involved are fewer than five. Disclosure could lead to the identification of individuals and would therefore constitute personal data.

This information is withheld under Section 40(2) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, as disclosure would be unfair and unlawful under UK GDPR.

3) In how many of these opened MHPS cases in the last four years were any concerns about doctors' performance, or allegations of misconduct, eventually upheld?

Of the completed MHPS cases, eight were upheld.

The Trust is unable to provide further breakdowns as the remaining figures are fewer than five. Disclosure could lead to the identification of individuals and is therefore exempt under Section 40(2) of the Freedom of Information Act.

○

4) Does the trust routinely track whether doctors subject to MHPS procedure have made **prior** public interest disclosures (in order to maintain organisational alertness for any possible vexatious/malicious, retaliatory disciplinary action against whistleblowers)

If so, please disclose how many of the doctors subject to MHPS procedure in the last four years had made prior public interest disclosures.

Answer: No, the Trust does not routinely track whether doctors subject to MHPS procedure have made prior public interest disclosures. All MHPS investigations are specific to immediate concerns.

5) Does the trust routinely track and evaluate doctors' experience of the trust's application of MHPS procedure? For example, does the trust routinely measure/survey doctors' experience of MHPS process, and if so, how does it use this information?

Answer: We do not currently survey doctors' experience of the MHPS process. However, doctors receive regular contact, support and signposting from the Medical Director's office directly or via Union/Medical Defence Union Representatives.

6) What mechanisms, if any, does the trust have to safeguard the wellbeing of doctors undergoing MHPS processes? Please share a relevant copy of the policy governing any such safeguards. How does the trust evidence that it is applying these safeguards safely and effectively?

Answer: Doctors' wellbeing is central to this process. Each doctor is treated as an individual and supported throughout the process by the Medical Director's Office, Divisional Director/Clinical Director – they are signposted to external support and also offered Occupational Health assessment. They are also often supported by their Union/Defence Union Representatives.

If you are not satisfied with the handling of your request, you have the right to request an internal review. Requests for an internal review should be submitted within 40 working days from the date of this response, and should be addressed to d.wraith@nhs.net.

If you remain dissatisfied after the internal review, you have the right to appeal to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). The ICO can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF
Tel: 0303 123 1113
Website: <https://ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/>