

Freedom of Information Act Request

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

I would like to request details of any external companies or individuals used by the trust in relation to the disciplinary action and ultimate dismissal of your former chief medical officer, Tim Noble. This should include legal advice, any HR advice, and any other companies involved in advising and assisting on this.

I would like to know

1. The company involved
2. What sort of support it provided
3. The cost of this.

Section 40(2) – Personal data (absolute exemption)

Your request relates directly to disciplinary and dismissal proceedings concerning an identifiable individual. This constitutes personal data under the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR).

Disclosure of information about the disciplinary process, associated support arrangements, or outcomes would be unfair and unlawful, and would breach data protection principles.

This information is therefore exempt from disclosure under Section 40(2) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

As this is an absolute exemption, no public interest test is required.

Section 42 – Legal professional privilege (qualified exemption)

Where external legal advisers were engaged, any information relating to their involvement forms part of legally privileged communications between the Trust and its legal representatives.

This includes the identity of legal advisers, the nature of advice provided, and associated costs where disclosure would reveal litigation strategy or legal engagement.

This information is exempt under Section 42 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Public interest test

The Trust recognises the public interest in transparency around the use of public funds. However, there is a strong and well-established public interest in preserving legal professional privilege to ensure public bodies can obtain full and frank legal advice. Disclosure would undermine this principle and could prejudice the Trust's ability to manage legal matters effectively.

On balance, the public interest favours maintaining this exemption.

Section 43(2) – Commercial interests (qualified exemption)

Details of external providers, the support they provided, and associated costs form part of commercially sensitive arrangements. Disclosure would be likely to prejudice both the Trust's commercial interests and those of third-party suppliers, including by undermining future procurement and contractual negotiations. This information is therefore exempt under Section 43(2) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Public interest test

While there is a general public interest in accountability for expenditure, this is outweighed by the need to protect commercially sensitive information and ensure the Trust can secure services on competitive terms in future. Disclosure in this context would not be in the wider public interest.

Summary

Our Ref: 118
February 2026

For the reasons set out above, the Trust is refusing your request under:

- Section 40(2) – Personal data
- Section 42 – Legal professional privilege
- Section 43(2) – Commercial interests

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/>

Our Ref: 118
February 2026