

09 March 2018

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By email

Dear [REDACTED],

### **Request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the “FOI Act”)**

I refer to your emails of **24th January 2018** and **12th February 2018** in which you requested information under the FOI Act from NHS Improvement. Since 1 April 2016, the Patient Safety functions under Section 13R of the NHS Act 2006 have been exercised by the NHS Trust Development Authority, as part of the integrated organisation known as NHS Improvement.

### **Your request**

The requested the following information:

*“I would like you to please supply me with the following data:*

- 1. How many patient safety incidents (from Datix reports, etc) have been logged against Junior Doctors each year, for the past 5 years?*
- 2. How many Junior Doctors worked for the NHS each year, for the past 5 years?*
- 3. How many patient safety incidents (from Datix reports, etc) have been logged against Medical Associate Professionals (MAPs)\* each year, for the past 5 years (please break this down into the below mentioned groups)?*
- 4. How many Medical Associate Professionals (MAPs)\* worked for the NHS each year, for the past 5 years (please break this down into the below mentioned groups)?*

*\*MAPs are a group defined as containing: Physician Associates (PA), Physicians’ Assistants (Anaesthesia) (PA(A)), Surgical Care Practitioners (SCP) & Advanced Critical Care Practitioners (ACCP)*

- 5. How many patient safety incidents (from Datix reports, etc) have been logged against Advanced Nurse Practitioners (ANPs) each year, for the past 5 years?*

6. *How many Advanced Nurse Practitioners (ANPs) worked for the NHS each year, for the past 5 years?"*

NHS Improvement asked you to clarify your initial request. At the time we also advised that the incident data held are not complaints and they are not 'logged against' anyone. Any reference to a job title in the free text of an incident is simply that – we cannot infer that the reference to any specific posts means they were responsible for the incident.

The revised question settled on the free text search terms 'junior doctors and advanced nurse practitioners'. In your email response dated 12 February 2018 you stated that you were happy for you to supply data based on the free text terms as mentioned.

### **Decision**

NHS Improvement holds some of the information you have requested and has decided to release all of the information it holds.

We do not hold information as you have described for questions 2, 4 and 6.

In regard to questions 1, 3 and 5 NHS Improvement has decided to release all of the information that it holds. The information we hold is from the National Reporting and Learning System (NRLS). By way of background, some information about the NRLS may be helpful. The primary purpose of the NRLS is to enable learning from patient safety incidents occurring in the NHS. The NRLS was established in late 2003 as a largely voluntary scheme for reporting patient safety incidents, and therefore it does not provide the definitive number of patient safety incidents occurring in the NHS.

All NHS organisations in England and Wales have been able to report to the system since 2005. In April 2010, it became mandatory for NHS organisations to report all patient safety incidents which result in severe harm or death. All patient safety incident reports submitted to the NRLS categorised as resulting in severe harm or death are individually reviewed by clinicians to make sure that we learn as much as we can from these incidents, and, if appropriate, take action at a national level.

The NRLS is a dynamic reporting system, and the number of incidents reported as occurring at any point in time may increase as more incidents are reported. Experience in other industries has shown that as an organisation's reporting culture matures, staff become more likely to report incidents. Therefore, an increase in incident reporting should not be taken as an indication of worsening of patient safety, but rather as an increasing level of awareness of safety issues amongst healthcare professionals and a more open and transparent culture across the organisation.

A search of the NRLS was carried out on 23 February 2018 of all incidents reported as occurring between 1 January 2013 to 31 December 2017, (based on the date the incident was reported to have occurred) and exported to the NRLS on or before 22 January 2018 and where the free text description of the incident contained the agreed, specific key search phrases 'Junior Doctor' and 'Advanced Nurse Practitioner' including misspellings. The agreed key search phrases will pick up many appropriate incidents however we cannot

guarantee that there are not additional relevant incidents that an alternative keyword search strategy might have found.

Table 1. Breakdown of Incidents reported as occurring from 1st January 2013 to 31st December 2017 using the search term 'Junior Doctor'.

Year	Number of incidents
2013	3,717
2014	4,573
2015	5,655
2016	7,422
2017	6,876
<b>Total</b>	<b>28,243</b>

Table 2. Breakdown of Incidents reported as occurring from 1st January 2013 to 31st December 2017 using the search term 'Advanced Nurse Practitioner'.

Year	Number of incidents
2013	1,473
2014	2,202
2015	3,036
2016	3,793
2017	4,422
<b>Total</b>	<b>14,926</b>

Please note that NHS Foundation Trusts / NHS Trusts / the Department of Health are subject to the FOI Act and as such it is open to you to seek information directly from them. They will need to consider whether information can properly be provided by them in response to any such requests within the terms of the FOI Act.

### **Review rights**

If you consider that your request for information has not been properly handled or if you are otherwise dissatisfied with the outcome of your request, you can try to resolve this informally with the person who dealt with your request. If you remain dissatisfied, you may seek an internal review within NHS Improvement of the issue or the decision. A senior member of NHS Improvement's staff, who has not previously been involved with your request, will undertake that review.

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of any internal review, you may complain to the Information Commissioner for a decision on whether your request for information has been dealt with in accordance with the FOI Act.

A request for an internal review should be submitted in writing to FOI Request Reviews, NHS Improvement, Wellington House, 133-155 Waterloo Road, London SE1 8UG or by email to [nhsi.foi@nhs.net](mailto:nhsi.foi@nhs.net).

### **Publication**

Please note that this letter [and the attached information] will shortly be published on our website. This is because information disclosed in accordance with the FOI Act is disclosed to the public at large. We will, of course, remove your personal information (e.g. your name and contact details) from the version of the letter published on our website to protect your personal information from general disclosure.

Yours sincerely,

**NHS Improvement**