



Trust Headquarters
Nexus House
4 Gatwick Road
Crawley
West Sussex
RH10 9BG

Tel: 0300 123 0999
www.secamb.nhs.uk

15th July 2026
Internal Reference: 260702
Email:

Dear ,

Thank you for your request for information, which we received on **01/07/2026**.
We have considered your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.
Please ensure you quote the Internal Reference number above in any future correspondence.

Your Request

I would like to make a Freedom of Information request. Definitions used in this request:

- "Staff" means all individuals with authorised access to the trust's electronic patient record system(s), including substantive staff, bank staff, agency and locum staff, and students/trainees on placement.
- "Inappropriately accessed patient records" means access to a patient's record without clinical, administrative, or other business reason, as determined through the trust's own investigation and/or disciplinary process (regardless of whether the access was also reported as a data breach).

Can I please request the following information under the Freedom of Information act:

1. How many members of staff received a disciplinary sanction for inappropriately accessing patients' records, in each of the following financial years:

a) 2022-23

b) 2023-24



c) 2024-25

d) 2025-26

e) 2026-27 to date

2. Please list the type of disciplinary sanction(s) - for example informal counselling, training, verbal warning, first written warning, final written warning, dismissal - handed out to staff for inappropriately accessing patients' records in each of the following financial years.

For each type of sanction, please also list the **number** of staff served with this type of sanction each year.

a) 2022-23

b) 2023-24

c) 2024-25

d) 2025-26

e) 2026-27 to date

If this aggregate data is not held in a readily reportable format and would exceed the appropriate cost limit under section 12 of FOIA, I would be grateful if you could instead provide, for each year: (i) the total number of dismissals, and (ii) the total number of all other (non-dismissal) sanctions, as a reasonable proxy that should require substantially less staff time to compile.

3. How many staff were found, following investigation, to have inappropriately accessed patients' records but received no disciplinary sanction in each of the following financial years:

a) 2022-23

b) 2023-24

c) 2024-25

d) 2025-26

e) 2026-27 to date





Formal Response

The Trust takes confidentiality and appropriate access to patient records seriously. Staff are expected to access patient information only where this is necessary for their role and in line with the Trust's confidentiality, information governance and conduct requirements. The Trust's Confidentiality Code of Conduct states that attempts to access personal data where it is not necessary to fulfil a role may constitute a breach of confidentiality and may result in disciplinary action, including dismissal for gross misconduct where appropriate.

In relation to questions 1 to 3, the Trust does not hold the requested information in a centrally reportable format that would allow us to provide the figures requested by financial year and by sanction type within the appropriate cost limit.

To answer the request as framed, the Trust would be required to manually review individual employee relations, investigation and disciplinary records across the specified financial years to identify whether each case related specifically to inappropriate access to patient records, whether the allegation was upheld following investigation, what sanction was applied, and whether any cases resulted in no disciplinary sanction. This would require a case-by-case review and cross-checking of records held by different teams and systems.

Under Section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Trust is not obliged to comply with a request where it estimates that the cost of doing so would exceed the appropriate limit. The appropriate limit for NHS organisations is £450, which equates to 18 hours of staff time. The Trust estimates that locating, retrieving, reviewing and extracting the information requested would exceed this limit. We are therefore refusing this part of your request under Section 12 of the Act.

In accordance with Section 16 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Trust has a duty to provide advice and assistance. You may wish to refine your request by narrowing the scope, for example by limiting it to a shorter timeframe, requesting data for a single financial year, or asking for information that is already held in a more readily reportable format. If you submit a refined request, the Trust will consider it in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act.

Next steps

Some information held by the Trust is routinely published on our [website](#) and may be of assistance.

If you are dissatisfied with the Trust's response to your request, you have the right to ask for an internal review.

Requests for an internal review should be submitted within **40 working days** of the date of this response and should be sent to:

Richard Banks, Head of Corporate Governance at FOI@secamb.nhs.uk





The internal review will be conducted by an individual who was not directly involved in handling your original request, ordinarily the Trust's Data Protection Officer. We aim to complete internal reviews within **20 working days** of receipt.

If you remain dissatisfied following the outcome of the internal review, you may complain to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). The ICO generally expects complaints to be raised promptly following the completion of an internal review.

The easiest way to raise a complaint is via the ICO's website:
www.ico.org.uk/foicomplaints

Alternatively, you may write to:
Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
SK9 5AF

Yours sincerely,

Corporate Governance Team
South East Coast Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust

