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7th August 2026
Internal Reference: 260726
Email:

Dear ,

Thank you for your request for information, which we received on **11/07/2026**.
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.

Please accept the Trust's apologies for the delay and inconvenience you have experienced regarding your FOIA request.

Your Request

For the period from **1 January 2021 to the date this request is processed**, please provide:

1. The date on which the Trust most recently completed an audit, review, or other proactive monitoring exercise intended to identify inappropriate or unauthorised access to patient records by staff (for example, access where there was no legitimate work-related reason).
2. As a result of that most recent audit or monitoring exercise:
 - the number of incidents identified where the Trust concluded that a member of staff had accessed patient records without a legitimate work-related reason, or where the access was otherwise found to be inappropriate or unauthorised.
3. During the period 1 January 2021 to the date this request is processed:
 - the number of cases involving inappropriate or unauthorised access to patient records that were referred or reported to an external enforcement or regulatory body (for example, the Information



- Commissioner's Office, the police, NHS Counter Fraud Authority, or a professional regulator).
4. During the same period, the number of staff who received each of the following outcomes or sanctions in relation to inappropriate or unauthorised access to patient records:
 - Informal management action
 - Written warning (or equivalent)
 - Final written warning (or equivalent)
 - Suspension
 - Dismissal
 - Resignation while under investigation
 - Referral to a professional regulator
 - Any other disciplinary outcome (please specify the category if recorded)
 5. As of the date this request is processed, the number of members of staff who are currently subject to an active investigation concerning alleged inappropriate or unauthorised access to patient records.

Formal Response

The Trust takes confidentiality and appropriate access to patient records very 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 has policies and procedures in place relating to confidentiality, information governance and data protection. Staff are made aware that patient information must only be accessed where there is a legitimate work-related reason to do so. The Trust's confidentiality requirements make clear 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 5, the Trust does not hold the requested information in a centrally reportable format that would allow us to provide the figures requested across the full period from 1 January 2021 to the date this request is processed. To answer the request as framed, the Trust would be required to manually review individual audit, monitoring, information governance, incident, employee relations, investigation and disciplinary records across the specified period. This would be necessary to identify whether each case related specifically to inappropriate or unauthorised access to patient records, whether the allegation was upheld, what outcome or sanction was applied, whether any referral or report was made to an external enforcement or regulatory body, and whether any active investigation remains ongoing. 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 information 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



Saving Lives,
Serving Our Communities

Chair: Michael Whitehouse CEO: Simon Weldon