



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

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

12 August 2026
Internal Reference: 260735
Email:

Dear ,

Thank you for your request for information, which we received on **14/07/2026**.
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 and our Formal Response

Can you please tell me:

1) How many instances have there been of employees wrongfully accessing the records of patients in each of the following years:

- a) 2021/22
- b) 2022/23
- c) 2023/24
- d) 2024/25
- e) 2025/26

2) How many of the instances listed in answers 1a to 1e were subject to an internal investigation by the trust? Please give numbers for each year.

3) How many of the instances listed in answers 1a to 1e resulted in staff being disciplined? Please give numbers for each year.

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, 2 and 3, the Trust does not hold the requested information in a centrally reportable format that would allow us to provide the figures requested for each financial year from 2021/22 to 2025/26.

To answer questions 1, 2 and 3 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 financial years. This would be necessary to identify whether each instance related specifically to wrongful or unauthorised access to patient records, whether it was subject to an internal investigation, and whether any disciplinary action resulted. 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 in questions 1, 2 and 3 would exceed this limit. We are therefore refusing questions 1, 2 and 3 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 one financial year, a shorter timeframe, or a specific category of record or investigation outcome. If you submit a refined request, the Trust will consider it in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act.

4) How many of the instances listed in answers 1a to 1e were reported to the Information Commissioner's Office? Please give numbers for each year.





The Trust has reported the following instances to the ICO. The information source has been taken from the Data Security & Protection Toolkit.

- A) 2021/22 - less than 5*
- b) 2022/23 - 0
- c) 2023/24 - 0
- d) 2024/25 - 0
- e) 2025/26 - less than 5*

*The Trust has applied a 'less than 5' caveat to the above. This is used to prevent the potential re-identification of information due to small numbers.

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





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