

Will there be a charge for my request?

The cost limit for public authorities is £450 (£600 for government authorities). This is the cost for the trust to comply with your request.

If your request is under this limit you may be charged for photocopying and postage (if this comes to more than £25).

If the cost of your request exceeds the £450 cost limit you will be contacted and told how much it will cost (this will include staff time, photocopying and postage). You will also be given the opportunity to modify your request which may reduce the cost considerably. Please note that the trust may refuse a request that exceeds the cost limit if unreasonable effort and resources are required to comply.

What can I do if I am not satisfied with the outcome of my request?

If you have a complaint about how your request for information has been handled, please contact the:

Complaints Department

Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust
Pinewood House
Pinewood Place
Dartford
Kent DA2 7WG

Tel: 01322 625700
Fax: 01322 625711
Email: complaints@oxleas.nhs.uk

If you want to take the matter further you can contact the Information Commissioner:

FOI Compliance Team (complaints)
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire SK9 5AF

Where to get assistance and more information:

If you require assistance writing your request or would like to discuss the Freedom of Information Act with a member of staff, please contact the Information Governance Team on Tel: 01322 299854

More information can be found on the Information Commissioner's website www.ico.org.uk



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The Freedom of Information Act (2000) What does this mean?

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What is the Freedom of Information Act (2000)?

The Freedom of Information Act was passed on 30 November 2000. Members of the public now have a right to know about the work, activities and decisions of all public bodies in the UK. This includes the National Health Service (NHS) and local authorities.

As of 1 January 2005, Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust must reply to any written request for information (email is preferable). We are required to respond to requests by saying whether we hold the information and, if we do, to provide it within 20 working days (this excludes weekends and bank holidays).

The Information Commissioner, an independent public official, will monitor the implementation of the Act to ensure all public authorities are compliant with this new legislation.

How do I make a request?

All requests will be handled by the:

**Information Governance Team
Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust
Bracken House
Bracton Lane off Leyton Cross Road
Dartford
Kent DA2 7AF**

Email: foi@oxleas.nhs.uk

All formal requests for information, whether by email or letter, should be clearly marked Freedom of Information. They should also contain the name and address of the applicant and full details of the information required.

Please make sure that you have:

- Been clear about whether you would prefer to receive the information in email or paper format.
- Made your request as specific as possible. If your request is too broad, we may ask you to clarify it, meaning that it will take longer for us to get the information to you.
- Provided as full a description as possible of the information you require.

Are there any exemptions to the information that is available?

There are some exemptions to the type of information that can be requested under the Act. For example, we will still need to keep patient/ personal information confidential.

If your request is refused we will clearly explain the reasons why.

Will patient information remain confidential?

Yes. The Freedom of Information Act does not change the need for patient confidentiality.

Patient notes, for example, can only be requested by the patient to whom the information refers or someone acting on their behalf with their consent. People should continue to use the Data Protection Act (1998) to access personal information held about them.

Our leaflet – **Your Healthcare Records. What information we store about you and how you can apply to see it**– discusses this process.

What happens once my request has been received?

We are obliged to respond to requests within 20 working days. We can exceed this time if it is necessary to consider whether it is within the public interest to disclose exempt information.

If you would like further information please see our Freedom of Information Act policy and Freedom of Information Act procedure. You can access these from the publication scheme on our website.

The publication scheme

Every public body has produced a publication scheme which informs the public what information is routinely made available. You may find it useful to look at our publication scheme before making your request, as much of the trust's information is available here. The publication scheme is divided into categories such as finance, policies, procedures and information on services.

Our publication scheme is available on our website www.oxleas.nhs.uk