

**Reference Number:** FOIAH2324/152  
**From:** Private Individual  
**Date:** 15 June 2023  
**Subject:** Patients who have had operations cancelled twice

**Q1** Please can you provide figures on the total number of patients who have had their operation cancelled for a second time. I would like these figures broken down by year for each of the past five years: 2022, 2021, 2020, 2019, 2018.

For context, I am looking for incidents where the surgery was cancelled for non-clinical reasons (i.e. staff shortages, equipment problems, lack of theatre capacity) and also not at the request of the patient.

**A1**

| Year  | Operations cancelled more than twice |
|-------|--------------------------------------|
| 2018  | 23                                   |
| 2019  | 12                                   |
| 2020  | Nine                                 |
| 2021  | Six                                  |
| 2022  | 14                                   |
| Total | 64                                   |

**Q2** In addition, please can you provide the largest number of times that a single patient has had their operation cancelled for non-clinical reasons, over the past five years. Please could you name the operation in question (e.g. hip replacement), and the year that the last cancellation took place (e.g. 2022).

**A2** Information exempted under Section 40: Personal data. Providing this information would likely identify individuals involved.

The Trust is unable to respond to all or specific elements of your request where the response would indicate five or less individuals. The Trust is withholding this information under Section 40 (Personal Information) of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000 to reduce the risk of any individuals being identified. The Trust is of the view that disclosure of such information would significantly increase the risk of individuals being identified and as such would constitute a breach of their personal data.

The Trust has applied exemption Section 40(2) of the FOIA and is therefore withholding the information as disclosure which may identify an individual would breach their rights under the Data Protection Act 2018. The grounds for application of this exemption include:

- Any data relating to patients or staff is third party data, furthermore health data is classified as sensitive personal data within the Data Protection Act 2018. As such, Section 40 (2) of the FOIA applies along with the Trusts duty of confidentiality. Therefore under s.2 (3) (f) (ii) of the FOIA, there is an absolute

exemption from disclosure on the grounds that it would contravene the First Data Protection Principle.

- The Trust has a duty under the Data Protection Act 2018 and specifically the First Data Protection Principle to ensure personal data regarding staff and patients is processed fairly and lawfully. Disclosure of such data which may identify an individual, either through the data alone or other data in conjunction with that data which may identify an individual would therefore breach this principle.
- The Data Protection Act 2018 defines sensitive personal data to include data relating to the “physical or mental health or condition” of a person. Any such information about specific individuals falls within this category and disclosure of such data including statistical data, with any potential likelihood of identification would breach the Data Protection Act 2018.