

Ref. No: 1780
Date: 2305/2025
Subject: Clinical Systems

REQUEST

On an excel sheet

I am writing to make an open government request for all the information to which I am entitled under the FOI Act 2000.

Please provide information regarding the following system contracts:

1. BI & Data Warehousing
2. Cardiology
3. Clinical Communication and Collaboration
4. Diagnostic Reporting
5. Digital Dictation
6. Inpatient E-prescribing
7. Integration Platform
8. Oncology
9. PACS
10. Patient Administration System
11. Patient Engagement Portal
12. Radiology Information Systems
13. Scheduling

Please enter 'No System Installed' or 'No Department' under supplier name if your trust does not use the system or have the department:

- a) System type –
- b) Supplier name –
- c) System name –
- d) Date installed –
- e) Contract expiration –
- f) Is this contract annually renewed? - Yes/No
- g) Do you currently have plans to replace this system? - Yes/No
- h) Procurement framework –
- i) Other systems it integrates with? –
- j) Total value of contract (£) –
- k) Notes (e.g. we are currently out to tender) –

System definitions:

BI & Data Warehousing: Integrates data and information collected from various sources, e.g. electronic patient/health records, enterprise resource

planning systems, radiology and lab databases, wearables etc, into one comprehensive database

Cardiology: A specialist clinical information system is used for cardiology

Clinical Communication and Collaboration: Clinical communication and collaboration tools enable clinicians to securely electronically communicate, both individually and across teams, to co-ordinate and plan patient care. They are often delivered as mobile apps and may be embedded into clinical workflow or connected to EPRs. Some may be offered as alternatives to Bleep systems. Examples: Bleepa, Alcidion, Armour Communications, MedicBleep

Diagnostic Reporting: test results which are electronically transmitted to the clinician who ordered them, with receipt acknowledgement. This is usually a module in EPR, PACS or RIS system.

Digital Dictation: device used for recording and managing natural speech, allowing staff to verbally input a patients' note into a system without having to manually input it.

Inpatient E-prescribing: Advanced e-prescribing in use across wards for inpatient care, incorporating specialist prescribing and (ideally) clinical decision support, integrated as part of end-to-end medicines management. This possibly offers the single biggest opportunity for improving patient safety through digitalisation.

Integration Platform: Software that supports the integration and interoperability of various clinical and management IT systems and services.

Oncology: An Oncology Information Management solution supports the multidisciplinary teams involved in the care of patients with cancer.

PACS: A picture archiving and communications system is used for diagnostic images.

Patient Administration System: These are the core enterprise systems, containing a Master Patient Index, used by NHS trusts to enable them to know when a patient has arrived, who they are, who they were seen by, what treatment they received and what happened to them. This core functionality, needed by every trust, covers admission, discharge and transfer.

Patient Engagement Portal: It is a digital platform used by healthcare providers across the system to securely share data and interact with patients/carers to better support/manage patient's health and wellbeing.

Radiology Information Systems: Radiology results and reporting are managed electronically.

Scheduling: Enterprise level systems that are designed to effectively and efficiently allocate resources (staff, equipment, treatment and even data) to patients at the necessary time and place. Systems in this area range from appointment booking, typically for clinic slots, through to far more sophisticated SAP-style resource allocation and scheduling systems.

RESPONSE

Please see attached spread sheet

The data for the costs of these systems has been exempted

The Freedom of Information Act gives the public a general right of access to information held by a public authority, including activity and financial details, subject to exemptions within the Act.

Section 43 – Commercial Interests - sets out an exemption from the right to know if:
The release of the information is likely to prejudice the commercial Interests of any person. (A person may be an individual, a company, the public authority itself or any other legal entity.)

Information can only be withheld under this exemption if the public authority is satisfied that to release the information would damage someone's commercial Interests. A commercial Interest relates to a person's ability to participate competitively in a commercial activity

Where a public authority is satisfied that the release of information would prejudice someone's commercial Interests, it can only refuse to provide the information if it is satisfied that the public Interest in withholding the information outweighs the public Interest in disclosing it.

The bias is in favour of disclosure and there will be occasions where information is released even though it is likely to prejudice someone's commercial Interest. If the public Interest is in favour of disclosure, the FOIA requires the information to be released.

The public interest test undertaken is specifically in relation to section 43(2) with the prejudice to commercial interests being those of the Trust (as the public authority).

Public Interest Arguments	
In favour of disclosure	In favour of non-disclosure
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There is a general public Interest in the income, expenditure and activity of public authorities.• To increase the accountability of the public authority.• To increase the transparency of the public authority.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A business case could be produced from the information based upon the service supply, demand and cost information.• The information could induce further competitors to the market.• Could prejudice MWL's negotiations

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote competition in the industry 	<p>with other organisations as it would be known what the demand and costs are of the service.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The information requested is for the last 12 months available therefore attracts significant time sensitivity. It is not possible for the authority to gain the reciprocal information from private providers, giving the private providers an unfair advantage
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Outcome In accordance with section 1 (1) the Freedom of Information Act, It can be confirmed that the information is held by the authority. In the balance of the public interest test under section 43 of the FOIA the Trust determines that the public Interest is in the non-disclosure of the information requested.

The level of detail requested could be used to determine:

- Service demand including the complexity and longevity of conditions,
- Commissioning arrangements including local analysis of demand and supply by area,
- Cost of service provision including an indication of profit margins.

The combination of this information could then allow a business case to be produced to directly compete with NHS service providers including Mersey West Lancashire NHS Trust. Furthermore the Trust is of the opinion that the information is likely to be used for this purpose.

This would have an adverse impact of the commercial activity of the authority therefore section 43 (2) of the Freedom of Information Act is engaged.