

Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA)

Decision notice

Date: 8 September 2016

Public Authority: Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust

Address: St Thomas Street
London
SE1 9RT

Decision (including any steps ordered)

1. The complainant has requested information, including internal papers and external correspondence, on an online petition launched by Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Trust ("the Trust"). The Trust has failed to respond to this request for information.
2. The Commissioner considers that the Trust breached section 10(1) FOIA in the handling of this request.
3. The Commissioner requires the public authority to take the following steps to ensure compliance with the legislation.
 - The Trust must provide the complainant with a response to this request in accordance with its obligations under FOIA.
4. The public authority must take these steps within 35 calendar days of the date of this decision notice. Failure to comply may result in the Commissioner making written certification of this fact to the High Court pursuant to section 54 of the Act and may be dealt with as a contempt of court.

Request and response

5. On 13 May 2016 the complainant made the following request to the Trust:

"The Trust has launched an on-line petition "Keep Our Bus Stops Safe" on the change.org website. Please could you release all internal papers and external correspondence about this petition and the highway changes on Westminster Bridge proposed in the TfL consultation "Proposed changes at Westminster Bridge South" which ran from 10 November 2015 to 22 December 2015."

6. An automatic acknowledgement was sent by the Trust on 13 May followed by a holding letter confirming it as an information request on the same day. The complainant followed this up on 14 June 2016 after hearing nothing further. The Commissioner wrote to the Trust on 16 August 2016 and at the date of this notice the Trust had not provide a response to this request.

Scope of the Case

7. The complainant contacted the Commissioner on 13 July 2016 and again on 5 September 2016 to complain about the way his request for information had been handled.
8. The Commissioner has considered whether the Trust dealt with this request in accordance with its obligations under section 10(1) FOIA.

Reasons for decision

9. Section 10(1) provides that:

"Subject to subsections (2) and (3), a public authority must comply with section 1(1) promptly and in any event not later than the twentieth working day following the date of receipt."

10. Section 1(1) provides that:

"Any person making a request for information to a public authority is entitled –

*(a) to be informed in writing by the public authority whether it holds information of the description specified in the request, and
(b) if that is the case, to have that information communicated to him."*

11. The request was made on 13 May 2016 and a response is yet to be provided. The Commissioner therefore finds that the Trust breached section 10(1) in failing to respond within 20 working days.

Right of appeal

12. Either party has the right to appeal against this decision notice to the First-tier Tribunal (Information Rights). Information about the appeals process may be obtained from: First-tier Tribunal (Information Rights)

GRC & GRP Tribunals,
PO Box 9300,
LEICESTER,
LE1 8DJ

Tel: 0300 1234504

Fax: 0870 739 5836

Email: GRC@hmcts.gsi.gov.uk

Website: www.justice.gov.uk/tribunals/general-regulatory-chamber

13. If you wish to appeal against a decision notice, you can obtain information on how to appeal along with the relevant forms from the Information Tribunal website.
14. Any Notice of Appeal should be served on the Tribunal within 28 (calendar) days of the date on which this decision notice is sent.

Signed

Jill Hulley
Senior Case Officer
Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF