



East London
NHS Foundation Trust
Information Governance
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01 October 2024

Our reference: FOI DA5583

I am responding to your request for information received 4 September 2024. This has been treated as a request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

I am now enclosing a response which is attached to the end of this letter. Please do not hesitate to contact me on the contact details above if you have any further queries.

Yours sincerely,

Information Rights Coordinator

If you are dissatisfied with the Trust's response to your FOIA request then you should contact us and we will arrange for an internal review of this decision.

If you remain dissatisfied with the decision following our response to your complaint, you may write to the Information Commissioner for a decision under Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

Tel: 0303 123 1113
Web: www.ico.org.uk

Please note that the data supplied is not allowed to be re-used and/or published without the explicit consent of East London NHS Foundation Trust. Please contact the signatory to request permission if this is your intention



We promise to work together creatively to: learn 'what matters' to everyone, achieve a better quality of life and continuously improve our services.
We care . We respect . We are inclusive

Chief Executive Officer: Lorraine Sunduza
Chair: Eileen Taylor

Request: I am writing to request information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 regarding cases handled by East London NHS Foundation Trust that involve individuals who have claimed to be possessed by demons/spirits/otherworldly entities or have sought exorcisms/treatment for their alleged condition.

Specifically, I request the following information:

Question 1: The number of cases recorded by East London NHS Foundation Trust between January 2010 and August 2024 in which patients reported symptoms or experiences consistent with what they or others around them identified as “possession” by supposed supernatural forces. This may include, but is not limited to, patients explicitly mentioning possession, demonic influence, ghosts or spirits or requesting an exorcism as part of their care or consultation.

Answer: The Trust has reviewed question 1 of your request for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOI) 2000.

Section 40 for the FOI Act states:

(2) This exemption covers the personal data of third parties (anyone other than the requester) where complying with the request would breach any of the principles in the UK GDPR.

In order to provide the information requested, it would be necessary to access patient records as the information is not held in a searchable format. There is no legal basis to access patient records for the purposes of responding to a Freedom of Information request. The Trust is therefore unable to provide a response.

Question 2: Details of any protocols or guidelines followed by healthcare professionals in dealing with such cases. This includes whether patients reporting these symptoms were referred to mental health services, spiritual care, or other specialized services.

Answer: The Trust could receive referrals from colleagues with regard to Muslim service users who believe they are possessed by Jinns. In such cases we work closely with the key clinicians involved to help them understand how the service user understands the possession. Our specialist team members will also support the user according to orthodox Islamic belief and practice.

The same principles apply when the referral is from a Christian tradition.

Question 3: Information on any training provided to healthcare professionals within the Trust on how to manage cases where patients claim to be possessed or request exorcism, including any collaboration with religious or spiritual leaders.

Answer: The Trust is in the process of establishing a series of webinars for all staff to support them in understanding these beliefs and how they might support patients in the context of their mental distress. In the past we have delivered a range of trainings to staff, especially in the area of Jinn possession, but this has been down to individual teams to deliver.



Question 4: The number of referrals or consultations made by East London NHS Foundation Trust to external religious or spiritual organizations (e.g., Church of England, Catholic Church, or independent spiritual practitioners) concerning cases of alleged possession or requests for exorcism.

Answer: The Trust has reviewed question 4 of your request for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOI) 2000.

Section 40 for the FOI Act states:

(2) This exemption covers the personal data of third parties (anyone other than the requester) where complying with the request would breach any of the principles in the UK GDPR.

In order to provide the information requested, it would be necessary to access patient records as the information is not held in a searchable format. There is no legal basis to access patient records for the purposes of responding to a Freedom of Information request. The Trust is therefore unable to provide a response.

Question 5: Any recorded outcomes or follow-up actions taken in these cases, including whether the patients received mental health diagnoses, were referred to external organizations, or received any form of spiritual care.

Answer: The Trust has reviewed question 5 of your request for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOI) 2000.

Section 40 for the FOI Act states:

(2) This exemption covers the personal data of third parties (anyone other than the requester) where complying with the request would breach any of the principles in the UK GDPR.

In order to provide the information requested, it would be necessary to access patient records as the information is not held in a searchable format. There is no legal basis to access patient records for the purposes of responding to a Freedom of Information request. The Trust is therefore unable to provide a response.



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