



**East London**  
NHS Foundation Trust  
**Information Governance**  
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15 October 2024

**Our reference: FOI DA5643**

I am responding to your request for information received 10 October 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](http://www.ico.org.uk)

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**We care . We respect . We are inclusive**

**Chief Executive Officer:** Lorraine Sunduza  
**Chair:** Eileen Taylor

**Request:** Thank you for replying to my FOI request. Regarding the response to question 1, I completely understand the need to protect patient anonymity and GDPR regulations.

**Original Question:** 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:**

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.

**Question 1a:** As I am only interested in numbers of patients presenting with supposed demonic possession symptoms, would it be permissible to request a short time period (between 2018-2023),

**Answer:** The Trust has reviewed question 1a 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.

Please note: The trust does not record ‘demonic possession’ as a searchable term, this would usually be deemed as a sign and symptom of a more specific condition. Conditions can be appropriately searched, not the signs or symptoms. The only way to determine the signs or symptoms would be to access individual patient records.

**Question 1b:** that any information is redacted to simple data (patient age, gender, ethnic group), so that I can just assess frequency across time?

**Answer:** The Trust has reviewed question 1b 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.*

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