**TMA FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT POLICY**

**Introduction**

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) requires all public authorities to adopt and maintain a publication scheme. In 2008 the Information Commissioner’s Office (ICO) introduced a single generic model publication scheme, for adoption by all public authorities that are subject to FOIA.

The model publication scheme commits a public authority to *‘produce and publish the method by which the specific information will be available so that it can be easily identified and accessed by members of the public’.* This is a very general scheme based on the principle that all public authorities need to recognise the public interest in the transparency of the services provided for and paid for by the general public. It is a commitment to make information easily available to the public.

General practitioners (GPs) providing primary medical services under most contracts with the NHS in England and Wales are public authorities in respect of information relating to those services.

The following policy sets out the Practice approach to the Freedom of Information (FoI) Act.

**Policy**

* The Practice will comply with the FoI Act and sees it as an opportunity to enhance public trust and confidence in the Practice
* The Practice will maintain a comprehensive ‘Publication Scheme’ that provides information which is readily accessible without the need for a formal FoI Act request.
* The request can be by email or on paper, and be made to any member of staff who will then pass it to the practice manager
* Practices cannot ask the reason for the request, or question its reasonableness, but can work with the person(s) requesting the information to help them clarify what it is they are after so that the practice can best meet the request
* The Practice will seek to satisfy all FoI Act requests promptly and within 20 working days. However, if necessary we will extend this timescale to give full consideration to a Public Interest test. If we do not expect to meet the deadline, we will inform the requester as soon as possible of the reasons for the delay and when we expect to have made a decision
* The Practice will continue to protect the personal data entrusted to us, by disclosing it only in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018
* The Practice will provide advice and assistance to requesters to facilitate their use of FoI Act. We will publish our procedures and assist requesters to clarify their requests so that they can obtain the information that they require.
* The Practice will work with the NHS England and other bodies with whom we work to ensure that we can meet our FoI Act obligations, including the disclosure of any information that they hold on our behalf.
* The Practice will apply the exemptions provided in the FoI Act and, where qualified exemptions exist, the Practice will disclose the information unless the balance of public interest lies in withholding it.
* The Practice will consult with third parties before disclosing information that could affect their rights and interests. However, according to the FoI Act, the Practice must take the final decision on disclosure
* The Practice will charge for information requests in line with the FoI Act Fees Regulations or other applicable regulations, including the Data Protection Act 2018
* The Practice will record all FoI Act requests and our responses and will monitor our performance in handling requests and complaints
* The Practice will ensure that all relevant staff are aware of their obligations under FoI Act
* **Note: The scheme is only for information held as a public authority and does not include any information that is not held, is held for other purposes or would be exempt from release.**

Information available from ***Thamesmead Medical Associates*** *providing medical services under contract to the NHS* under the Freedom of Information Act model publication scheme

Information covered by this scheme is only about the primary medical services we provide under contract to the National Health Service.

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| **Information to be published** | **How the information can be obtained**(eg hard copy, website) |  | **Cost** |
| **Class 1 - Who we are and what we do**(Organisational information, structures, locations and contacts)This will be current information only | Website, Practice leaflet |  | None |
| Doctors in the practice | Website, Practice leaflet |  | None |
| Contact details for the practice (named contacts where possible with telephone number and email address (if used)) | Website, Practice leaflet |  | None |
| Opening hours | Website, Practice leaflet |  | None |
| Other staffing details | Website, Practice leaflet |  | None |
| **Class 2 – What we spend and how we spend it**(Financial information relating to projected and actual income and expenditure, procurement, contracts and financial audit) |  |  |  |
| Details on NHS funding received by the practice.We would expect practices to consider publishing as much information as practically possible including as much detail as possible.  | Available by request in writing to the Practice Manager |  | None |
| Audit of NHS income  | Not Held |  | None |
| Details of expenditure items over £10,000 - published at least annually but at a more frequent quarterly or six-monthly interval where practical. | Available by request in writing to the Practice Manager |  | None |
| List and value of contracts awarded by the practice. We would normally only expect the practice to publish details of contracts that are of sufficient size to have gone through a formal tendering process. | Available by request in writing to the Practice Manager |  | None |
| Staff allowances and expenses that can be incurred or claimed, with totals paid to senior staff members (for the purpose of this document, senior staff are defined as partners or equivalent level), by references to categories. | Available by request in writing to the Practice Manager |  | None |
| Pay policy | Available by request in writing to the Practice Manager |  | None |
| Declaration of GPs’ NHS income.The information made available as part of GPs’ contractual obligation to publish their net income relating to NHS/HSC contracts, once this obligation is in force. A link may be provided to the information on a third party website, and /or a description of where this information is available. | Website |  | None |
| **Class 3 – What our priorities are and how we are doing**(Strategies and plans, performance indicators, audits, inspections and reviews) |  |  |  |
| Plans for the development and provision of NHS services | Not Held (CCG information) |  | None |
| Performance data including performance against targets | Available by request in writing to the Practice Manager |  | None |
| Inspection reports by regulators: the CQC | Website, CQC Website |  | None |
| **Class 4 – How we make decisions**(Decision making processes and records of decisions) |  |  |  |
| Records of decisions made in the practice affecting the provision of NHS services. | Available by request in writing to the Practice Manager  |  | None |
| **Class 5 – Our policies and procedures**(Current written protocols, policies and procedures for delivering our services and responsibilities)  |  |  |  |
| Policies and procedures about customer service | Available by request in writing to the Practice Manager |  | None |
| Internal instructions to staff and policies relating to the delivery of services | Available by request in writing to the Practice Manager |  | None |
| Policies and procedures about the recruitment and employment of staff | Available by request in writing to the Practice Manager |  | None |
| Equality and diversity policy | Available by request in writing to the Practice Manager |  | None |
| Health and safety policy | Available by request in writing to the Practice Manager |  | None |
| Complaints procedures (including those covering requests for information and operating the publication scheme) | Website |  | None |
| Records management policies (records retention, destruction and archive) | Website – GDPR, Privacy notice |  | None |
| Data protection policies  | Website |  | None |
| Policies and procedures for handling requests for information | Website |  | None |
| **Class 6 – Lists and Registers**Currently maintained lists and registers only |  |  |  |
| Any publicly available register or list (if any are held this should be publicised; in most circumstances existing access provisions will suffice). | None Held |  | None |
| **Class 7 – The services we offer**(Information about the services we offer, including leaflets, guidance and newsletters produced for the public)Current information only |  |  |  |
| The services provided under contract to the NHS | Website, Practice leaflet |  | None |
| Charges for any of these services | Website, Practice leaflet |  | None |
| Information leaflets | Website, Practice leaflet |  | None |
| Out of hours arrangements | Website, Practice leaflet |  | None |