

FOI REF: 21/255

25th May 2021

Tel: 0300 131 4500
Website: www.esht.nhs.uk

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT

I am responding to your request for information under the Freedom of Information Act. The answers to your specific questions are as follows:

Could you please tell me for the calendar year 2020:

- 1) **How many complaints through the patient advice and liaison system (PALS) your Trust received from patients alleging they had been discriminated against or badly treated by a member of staff because of their being overweight or obese.**

Please do this by searching for complaints containing any of the words "weight", "fat", "obese", "overweight" and "bariatric" and filtering these to find those that refer to fat-shaming comments made by a member of staff.

[For the period 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2020, a search of PALS records using the specified criteria confirms:](#)

Word	Number of Contacts Found
Weight	2
Fat	0
Obese	0
Overweight	0
Bariatric	0

- 2) **Can you select the first five such complaints from 2020 and provide me with the following details:**

- a. **What type of staff member was the complaint levelled against? E.g. healthcare assistant, junior doctor, consultant, cleaner, kitchen staff.**

[Both contacts were raised in respect of a Consultant.](#)

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- b. Please quote the words allegedly used by the hospital staff or summarise the offending action.**

Contact 1 – a patient's relative was unhappy with comments made by Consultant relating to the patient's weight (the alleged comments were not noted by PALS).

Contact 2 – a patient contacted PALS wishing to report the attitude of the Consultant who allegedly made detrimental comments regarding the patient's weight at their last two consultations (the alleged comments were not noted by PALS)

- c. Please tell me what, if any, action was taken by your trust in response to these five sample complaints from the beginning of 2020.**

For Contact 1, PALS shared the details with the relevant manager and the Consultant offered to speak directly to the patient's relative to discuss the matter.

For Contact 2, PALS provided the patient (as requested) with details of how to raise the matter as a formal complaint.

If I can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Should you be dissatisfied with the Trust's response to your request, please write to Lynette Wells, Director of Corporate Affairs, East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust (lynette.wells2@nhs.net) quoting the above reference.

Yours sincerely

Linda Thornhill (Mrs)
Corporate Governance Manager
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