



FOI REF: 21/478

4th October 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:

I would like to know how many answer machines are used in the trust, who approves them and who monitors the number of calls that are returned.

East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust has a total of 1029 Voicemail Accounts. Unfortunately we have no way to monitor these accounts.

I would like to know how many (percentage) of the messages from patients are followed up by return calls?

We do not hold this information.

I would like in all my future dealings with the trust to be forewarned if I am being put through to an answer machine and to be given the option to request that I will be rung back.

There is no facility to "forewarn callers" that they may end up on a voicemail account. It all depends if the phone/department are busy. If its engaged or not answered they could end up on someone's voicemail, at which point a caller can either leave a message, or hang up and try calling back later themselves. The Trust does not have an automated facility to request a ring back if the line is busy.

I would like to know the CQC guidance on the use of telephone answering machines and their expectations about the return of calls.

For information in respect of CQC guidance, please contact the local CQC's for this information, contact details as follows:

NHS East Sussex Clinical Commissioning Group
scwcsu.esussex.foi@nhs.net

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 the Freedom of Information Department (esh-tr.foi@nhs.net), quoting the above reference.

Yours sincerely

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