

FOI REF: 22/271

Eastbourne District General Hospital  
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Eastbourne  
East Sussex  
BN21 2UD

10<sup>th</sup> August 2022

Tel: 0300 131 4500  
Website: [www.esht.nhs.uk](http://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:

**1. Could you detail the quantity of helium that has been purchased each year for the last 5 years?**

2018	213 units of various size/specification.
2019	138 units of various size/specification.
2020	86 units of various size/specification.
2021	86 units of various size/specification.
2022 YTD	86 units of various size/specification.

**2. What are the main uses for helium within the Trust?**

East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust use Heliox (21% and 28% O<sub>2</sub>) in HX size cylinders in Accident and Emergency / respiratory wards.

We also use Helium as the coolant in our 2 MRI scanners in Conquest (the MRI in Eastbourne District General Hospital is not owned by the Trust but In-health) these are approx. 600L each, to be primed when new and are topped up as required – These both have Zero Helium boil off technology which in theory are virtually lossless in He.

**3. Could you outline the various grades/types of helium purchased?**

Helium Balloon Gas & Medical Helium Sizes F, T & L.

**4. What has the cost of helium been for each of those 5 years?**

Whilst the Trust holds the information requested, it is applying a Section 43(2) exemption in relation to this part of the request as the release of the information is likely to prejudice its commercial interests.

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In applying the exemption consideration has been given to the public interest in enabling scrutiny of public sector decision making and the general public interest in accountability and transparency.

We have concluded that by providing value and price, we risk identifying price information net of discounts and breaching commercially sensitive price information

In this instance, we consider that the public interest in withholding the information is greater than the public interest in disclosing the information.

**5. Who are your suppliers of helium and can you provide a copy of the supply contracts?**

BOC.

The copy of the contract you have requested is exempt under section 41 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. This is because the information would originally have been provided in confidence. Information is exempt information if –

- (a) it was obtained by the public authority from any other person (including another public authority), and,
- (b) the disclosure of the information to the public (otherwise than under this Act) by the public authority holding it would constitute a breach of confidence actionable by that or any other person.

**6. Can you detail your procurement process for obtaining helium and send any tender documents relating to helium?**

The Trust has a contract with BOC via Health Trust Europe Framework.

All tender documents relating to Helium are exempt under section 41 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. This is because the information would originally have been provided in confidence. Information is exempt information if –

- (a) it was obtained by the public authority from any other person (including another public authority), and,
- (b) the disclosure of the information to the public (otherwise than under this Act) by the public authority holding it would constitute a breach of confidence actionable by that or any other person.

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, you have the right to request an internal review. Please write to the Freedom of Information Department ([esh-tr.foi@nhs.net](mailto:esh-tr.foi@nhs.net)), quoting the above reference, within 40 working days. The Trust is not obliged to accept an internal review after this date.

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Should you still be dissatisfied with your FOI request, you have the right of complaint to the Information Commissioner at the following address:

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

Telephone: 0303 123 1113

Yours sincerely

Linda Thornhill (Mrs)  
Corporate Governance Manager  
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