

FOI REF: 23/419

24<sup>th</sup> July 2023

Eastbourne District General Hospital

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## 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:

**My request relates to the use of nitrous oxide in healthcare settings.**

**I would like to request the following information:**

1. **Since 2018 until now, how many complaints have you had about potential excessive exposure to Nitrous Oxide via Entonox and prolonged exposure of staff to high levels of nitrous oxide? Please provide these figures broken down year-by-year eg. 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023 so far.**

None.

2. **Have you ever suspended the use of Entonox or any other inhaled as an inhalation analgesic for women in labour in either hospital setting or at home births? If so, please state how many times per year its use has been suspended since the first suspension was recorded.**

No.

3. **On average, how long has the use of Entonox been suspended for?**

Not applicable.

4. **Have you currently suspended or removed Entonox as an inhalation analgesic for women in Labour in either hospital setting or at home births, or are you planning to in the future?**

No.

5. **Do you have ventilation/scavenger units to remove Entonox in your maternity unit? If yes, how old are the ventilation/scavenger systems on the maternity wards and when they last updated/repared?**

- We are using the pure air 750 scavenger system.

- Pure air systems are checked annually.
- The ventilation system is checked annually.

**6. On average, how much exposure do maternity staff have to Entonox in a week and how often do you monitor the levels?**

The levels are tested annually and training / education given to staff to reduce exposure to staff.

**7. Have you had any staff who have been exposed to Entonox in excess of the Workplace Exposure Limit (WEL) of 100ppm (eight-hour time weighted average) under COSHH Regulations 2002, and what were the levels of exposure?**

No staff have been exposed to Entonox more than the Workplace Exposure Limit (WEL) which is significantly below the WEL.

**8. Is there currently any legal action involving your staff in relation to this?**

No.

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.

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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