

FOI REF: 26/026

3rd February 2026

Eastbourne District General Hospital

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East Sussex
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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:

Under the FOI Act I would like to request: whether they have issued warnings about use of AI companions (internally, or externally to your local population).

Clarification was sought as follows:

it is unclear from your request to whom you refer, and within what timescales. You have asked "...whether they have issued warnings...", but not stated who "they" is, and you have not given a time period (start date and end date) as to when "they" issued a warning.

Please can you clarify the exact nature of your FOI with full details; we have logged the FOI on the basis of your request, but cannot process it at this time without specific details. The FOI will remain on hold pending your response.

Confirmation was received as follows:

To clarify - by they I mean the Trust.

By timeframe: In the past five years

By companions I mean AI chatbots that offer mental health advice

East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust does not have any AI chatbots that offer mental health advice. Our communications department have confirmed that there have been no communications that has provided advice or guidance on using AI companions to either the public or to staff.

Please also note that East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust does not provide a Mental Health Service. This service is provided by Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust who are the Mental Health Trust for this area, their Freedom of Information email address is:-

spft.foi@nhs.net

Cont.../

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), 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

Freedom of Information Department
esh-tr.foi@nhs.net