

20th October 2026

Eastbourne District General Hospital

Kings Drive
Eastbourne
East Sussex
BN21 2UD

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

Further to your recent request for information made under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000, I now set out our answers to your specific questions, and any clarifications sought and provided, as follows:

Please provide a copy of the following information:

- 1. The full, final report produced by the HR consultancy firm Ibex Gale regarding the independent external review into the workplace culture, bullying, harassment, and racism within the General Surgery department at East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust.**

ESHT confirms that it holds the final report that was submitted by Ibex Gale in respect of the General Surgery departmental cultural review it was commissioned to undertake. However, ESHT is withholding disclosure of the requested report under Section 41(1) of the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act 2000.

The report contains information provided to ESHT by individuals who contributed to the departmental review in circumstances giving rise to an expectation of confidentiality. The information has the necessary quality of confidence and was provided for the specific purpose of informing the review.

The disclosure of the report under the FOI Act 2000 would place this information into the public domain and would constitute an actionable breach of the duty of confidence owed to those individuals.

ESHT has also considered whether there is an overriding public interest which would justify disclosure of the final report, notwithstanding the duty of confidence. While ESHT recognises the interest the general public has in openness and transparency regarding departmental reviews, it does not consider that this outweighs ESHT's duty to maintain confidentiality where individuals have provided information in confidence and in ensuring that staff are able to contribute openly and candidly to such reviews.

ESHT therefore considers that Section 41(1) is engaged and the report is withheld.

2. Any executive summaries, action plans, or sets of recommendations delivered to the Trust's board or executive team by Ibex Gale in connection with this specific review.

ESHT can confirm that no executive summary or formal summary of the reviews findings was separately produced.

ESHT can confirm that it received a formal action plan. However, ESHT is withholding disclosure of action plan under Section 41(1) of the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act 2000.

The action plan contains information related to ongoing Human Resources (HR) actions. These actions are confidential employment matters and meet necessary quality of confidence.

The disclosure of the action plan under the FOI Act 2000 would place this information into the public domain and would constitute an actionable breach of the duty of confidence owed to those individuals.

I trust this information is helpful in its detail or explanation however, if you are dissatisfied with the response, then you have the right to request an internal review. If you wish to seek an internal review, please write to the Freedom of Information Team at esh-tr.foi@nhs.net quoting the above FOI reference number, within 40 working days. Please note the Trust is not obliged to accept a request for an internal review after this time period.

Yours faithfully

Freedom of Information (FOI) Team
East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust
0300 131 4716
Core Hours of Business: Monday to Friday 9.00am to 4.00pm