



East London
NHS Foundation Trust
Information Governance
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5 June 2024

Our reference: FOI DA5382

I am responding to your request for information received 13 May 2024. This has been treated as a request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

I am now enclosing a response which is attached to the end of this letter. Please do not hesitate to contact me on the contact details above if you have any further queries.

Yours sincerely,

Information Rights Coordinator

If you are dissatisfied with the Trust's response to your FOIA request then you should contact us and we will arrange for an internal review of this decision.

If you remain dissatisfied with the decision following our response to your complaint, you may write to the Information Commissioner for a decision under Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

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

Tel: 0303 123 1113
Web: www.ico.org.uk

Please note that the data supplied is not allowed to be re-used and/or published without the explicit consent of East London NHS Foundation Trust. Please contact the signatory to request permission if this is your intention



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Chief Executive Officer: Lorraine Sunduza
Chair: Eileen Taylor

Request:

Question 1: Please can you provide the name of the 'IT electronic signature' software service provider used by the Trust in its use of esignatures to sign disciplinary documents - including dismissal letters.

Answer: The Trust has reviewed question 1 of your request for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOI) 2000.

Section 1(1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 states:

Any person making a request for information to a public authority is entitled—
(a) to be informed in writing by the public authority whether it holds information of the description specified in the request, and
(b) if that is the case, to have that information communicated to them.

East London NHS Foundation Trust does not use specific software to create electronic signatures on disciplinary letters and is therefore unable to provide a response.

Question 2: Please also confirm if the use of such esignatures automatically generates a digital audit trail that will confirm the date and time and location and the name of the individual(s) who generated said signature processes at a specific time, a valid IP server address to locate the computer station in use, any authorised access to these documents by Trust personnel and the amount of times a document has been edited and by whom - and will this document record any electronic/manual consent to the use of these signatures by the Trust individual whose name is affixed as verified confirmation of signed consent to the contents of said letters

Answer: The Trust has reviewed question 2 of your request for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOI) 2000.

Section 1(1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 states:

Any person making a request for information to a public authority is entitled—
(a) to be informed in writing by the public authority whether it holds information of the description specified in the request, and
(b) if that is the case, to have that information communicated to them.

East London NHS Foundation Trust does not use specific software to create electronic signatures on disciplinary letters and as such there is not audit trail associated with signing of disciplinary documents. The Trust is therefore unable to provide a response.

Question 3: Would the Trust be able to provide this detail to an employee on request, as it relates to personal data processing and retention - possibly via a Data Subject Access Request?

Answer: Not applicable.

Question 4: Please also confirm the positions of senior Trust personnel who have access and authority to use electronic signatures in disciplinary proceedings that result in a dismissal - and if there are mechanisms in place to prevent any unauthorised access and fraudulent use of 'electronically generated' signatures within this department - is this access 'privileged' access to personnel only within Employee Relations and do they have to enter a pin code to log-in? - do managers have access to the use of these signatures - or are they only used by the senior dismissing officer and ER/HR?



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Answer: The Trust has reviewed question 4 of your request for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOI) 2000.

Section 1(1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 states:

*Any person making a request for information to a public authority is entitled—
(a) to be informed in writing by the public authority whether it holds information of the description specified in the request, and
(b) if that is the case, to have that information communicated to them.*

East London NHS Foundation Trust does not use specific software to create electronic signatures on disciplinary letters and as such there is no list of senior Trust personnel with access and authority to use electronic signatures in Disciplinary proceedings. The Trust is therefore unable to provide a response.

Question 5: Are electronic signatures the preferred method of signing such documents as opposed to a verified wet signature by the named individual - and is there a policy in place that you can forward on to me?

Answer: The majority of correspondence relating to disciplinary proceedings and employee relations matters are sent electronically. As such electronic signatures are the usual way of signing these documents and letters.

The Trust does not have a specific policy in place regarding the use of electronic signatures for employee relations matters.



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