

Freedom of Information Act and Quality and Outcomes Framework (QOF) data

We are aware that PCTs have been receiving a number of requests for QOF data under the Freedom of Information Act. The Freedom of Information Act 2000 gives people a general right of access to recorded information held by public authorities with effect from January 2005. The term “public authorities” includes PCTs, GMS practices and PMS practices. PCTs will need to make their own decision on how to respond to each individual request for data, taking into account the details of that request.

QOF aspiration data

Information that relates to aspiration points is held by PCTs and will therefore need to be released if requested.

Outcome of QOF visits

If, following the QOF review visit, a PCT has written to a practice setting out the record of the visit, the information contained in the communication would have to be released if requested.

QOF achievement data

The Health and Social Care Information Centre will hold all QOF achievement data, downloaded from the Quality Management and Analysis System (QMAS) onto the Quality, Prevalence and Indicator Database (QPID). The Information Centre will be a public body subject to the Act. This means it will have to respond to requests for any QOF information it holds on QPID. PCTs will therefore be able to direct any requests for QOF achievement data to the Information Centre. Further information about this will be available in April 2005.

Detailed guidance on how to deal with FOI requests and how to deal with exemptions has been issued by the Department for Constitutional Affairs. This is available on www.dca.gov.uk/foi.

For further information please contact Elaine Cohen, NHS Employers Primary Care Contracting Manager e-mail elaine.cohen@nhsemployers.org