

Freedom of Information (FOI) Policy

Surgery Name	The Billesdon Surgery
Policy Version	1.1
Date of issue	13 th November 2025
Review Date	13 th November 2026
Approved by	Umar Sabat – Data Protection Officer

1. Introduction

The Billesdon Surgery is committed to openness, transparency, and accountability. This policy sets out how the Practice will comply with the **Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA)** and ensure that information about the practice is freely available to the public unless there is a valid reason for withholding it.

The FOIA gives anyone the right to request access to recorded information held by public authorities, including GP practices under the NHS.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Ensure compliance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000.
- Promote a culture of openness and transparency within the practice.
- Provide guidance to staff on how to handle FOI requests.
- Outline how members of the public can access information held by The Billesdon Surgery.

3. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All employees, partners, and contractors of The Billesdon Surgery.
- All recorded information held by the practice, regardless of format (e.g. paper, electronic, audio).
- All information requests received under the FOIA or the Environmental Information Regulations (EIR).

It does **not** cover access to personal information about patients or staff, which is managed under the **Data Protection Act 2018** and the **UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)**.

4. Legal and Policy Framework

This policy is based on:

- Freedom of Information Act 2000
- Environmental Information Regulations 2004
- Data Protection Act 2018 / UK GDPR
- NHS England and NHS Digital guidance
- Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) guidance

5. Responsibilities

- **Dr Rachel Peters** is the FOI Lead and is responsible for:
 - Coordinating and responding to FOI requests.
 - Maintaining the publication scheme.
 - Ensuring staff are aware of their responsibilities.
- **All Staff** are responsible for:
 - Forwarding any FOI requests immediately to Dr Peters.
 - Assisting in the retrieval of information.
 - Protecting information that should not be disclosed under exemptions.

6. The Publication Scheme

Under Section 19 of the FOIA, The Billesdon Surgery adopts the **Model Publication Scheme** approved by the Information Commissioner's Office.

Information routinely published by the practice includes (but is not limited to):

- Practice details and contact information
- Services offered
- Opening hours and appointment information
- Practice policies and procedures
- NHS contractual information
- Financial and performance data where applicable

The Billesdon Surgery

The Surgery's Publication Scheme is available:

- On the practice website: [The Billesdon Surgery - 4 Market Place, Billesdon, Leicester LE7 9AJ | 0116 2596206](#)
- In hard copy upon request

7. Making an FOI Request

Anyone can make an FOI request. Requests must:

- Be made in writing (email or letter).
- Include the requester's name, contact details, and a clear description of the information requested.

Requests should be sent to:

Dr Rachel Peters

The Billesdon Surgery
4 Market Rd
Billesdon
Leicester
LE7 9AJ

8. Responding to Requests

- The Surgery will respond to all valid FOI requests within **20 working days** of receipt.
- If the information requested is exempt under the Act, the Practice will explain why and cite the relevant exemption.
- If the request is unclear, the Practice will provide advice and assistance to help clarify it.
- Charges may apply for disbursements such as photocopying, printing, or postage, in line with the FOIA Fees Regulations.

9. Exemptions

Certain categories of information are exempt from disclosure under the FOIA, including:

- Personal data (covered by Data Protection legislation)
- Commercially sensitive information
- Information provided in confidence
- Information intended for future publication

Where exemptions apply, the Practice will ensure the decision to withhold information is justified, documented, and communicated to the requester.

10. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed **annually** or sooner if required by changes in legislation or guidance.

Dr Rachel Peters will monitor compliance and maintain records of all FOI requests and responses.

11. Complaints and Appeals

If an individual is dissatisfied with the response to an FOI request, they may request an **internal review** within 40 working days of receiving the response.

Requests for internal review should be sent to the Practice Manager in writing.

If the requester remains dissatisfied, they may complain to:

Information Commissioner's Office (ICO)

Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF

Website: www.ico.org.uk

12. Related Policies

- Data Protection and Confidentiality Policy
- Records Management Policy
- Information Governance Policy

Approved by: Umar Sabat – Data Protection Officer

Date: 13th November 2025

Review Due: 13th November 2026