

Freedom of Information Act 2000**The Royal Cornwall Hospitals NHS Trust Response to Information request****Date Request Received: 20 August 2024****FOI Ref No: 25875****Requested Information:**

I would like to submit a request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOI) for detailed information regarding Hearing Loops, Portable Hearing Loops, and intercom door entry systems across the entirety of RCHT.

Below is a list of questions I am asking under this FOI request:

- 1) Can you provide the locations of each hearing loop, including the specific ward, reception desk, and meeting space where they are installed?
- 2) Which reception desks, wards, and meeting spaces do not currently have a hearing loop installed?
- 3) Please specify the type of hearing loop installed at each location, whether it is a fixed or portable (one-on-one) loop, along with the make, model, and serial number of each device.
- 4) Could you provide an image showing the placement of the hearing loop on the desk?
- 5) What type of microphone is being used with each hearing loop, and can you provide an image showing the location of the microphone?
- 6) Please provide an image of the hearing loop signage/symbol and its location for each hearing loop, including portable loops.
- 7) What equipment is used to test each hearing loop and portable hearing loop?
- 8) What training is provided to administrative staff who operate desks with hearing loops, as well as training given to all staff on managing interactions with deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals?
- 9) What weekly tests are conducted by administrative staff on the hearing loops?

- 10) What monthly checks and tests are performed on the hearing loops, and could you provide a copy of each corresponding report?
- 11) Please provide records of the six-monthly checks and annual services performed on hearing loops since 2015, to date including copies of maintenance reports/certificates, as per the guidelines and BS7594 and BS8300 standards, for each hearing loop and portable hearing loop throughout RCHT.
- 12) Who has been responsible for testing, servicing, and writing reports on the hearing loops since 2015? Please also provide the names of the directors or managers overseeing compliance with relevant legislation, including NHS England's regulations, to ensure that individuals requiring hearing loops are not discriminated against under The Equality Act 2010.
- 13) What assistive equipment is provided for deaf or hard-of-hearing patients in wards, outpatient areas, and meetings? Despite being a patient for 23 years, I have never been offered assistive technology, although I am aware that such products are available.
- 14) What training have nurses received to ensure that individuals with hearing loss are not discriminated against?
- 15) What training has been provided to ensure all staff comply with NHS England's Accessible Information Standards?
- 16) Regarding intercom systems at entry points, do the speakers have a T setting that enables those with hearing aids to hear clearly? What provisions are in place for individuals who are profoundly deaf and use BSL as their first language when using these systems?
- 17) There has previously been introduced a three-push buzzer system to indicate a hearing loss for those unable to use the intercom; where have the signs instructing deaf individuals to use this method gone? During a recent visit to RCHT, however, staff members that they were unaware of this system.
- 18) I know that the three-push buzzer system is now outdated, as the door release button's click sound is no longer audible. Could you provide details on this issue?

19) I am also requesting information regarding who is responsible within RCHT for setting the standards to ensure that the 50,000+ letters and informational sheets comply with The Equality Act 2010 and NHS England's Accessible Information Standards.

20) I would like to know when these letters and informational sheets will be made fully accessible in accordance with the legislation mentioned.

21) Additionally, I request copies of the internal Access Audit for the entire RCHT from 2010 to the present, including the new hospital and the one that has been built at Penrice Hospital St Austell, and Access Statements.

Response:

Questions 1 and 2) **The majority of public facing/reception areas have hearing loop systems installed but we do not have a single list and to compile the list would take longer than available for the FOI response.**

Questions 3, 4, 5 and 6) **We do not hold specific details of every induction loop in a single location and to compile the list would take longer than available for the FOI response.**

7) What equipment is used to test each hearing loop and portable hearing loop?
We do not have equipment to test hearing assistive equipment. The equipment is largely maintenance free and we rely on the reporting of faults to highlight issues with the equipment.

8) What training is provided to administrative staff who operate desks with hearing loops, as well as training given to all staff on managing interactions with deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals?
Staff working at public facing/reception desk locations are made aware of the equipment in place. It does not require operational knowledge as the hearing loop systems are in permanent operation.

9) What weekly tests are conducted by administrative staff on the hearing loops?
As noted above, we do not test the systems.

10) What monthly checks and tests are performed on the hearing loops, and could you provide a copy of each corresponding report?
As noted above, we do not test the systems.

11) Please provide records of the six-monthly checks and annual services performed on hearing loops since 2015, to date including copies of maintenance reports/certificates, as per the guidelines and BS7594 and BS8300 standards, for each hearing loop and portable hearing loop throughout RCHT.

As noted above, we do not test the systems.

12) Who has been responsible for testing, servicing, and writing reports on the hearing loops since 2015? Please also provide the names of the directors or managers overseeing compliance with relevant legislation, including NHS England's regulations, to ensure that individuals requiring hearing loops are not discriminated against under The Equality Act 2010.

Under the Equality Act the Public Sector Duty would sit ultimately with the Chief Executive Officer and would be delegated to an appropriate Executive. It is also a broad question, as it will depend on the area. i.e. Estates and Facilities would sit with the Director of Estates and Facilities, but this will only cover the physical estate, other issue would be picked up elsewhere.

13) What assistive equipment is provided for deaf or hard-of-hearing patients in wards, outpatient areas, and meetings? Despite being a patient for 23 years, I have never been offered assistive technology, although I am aware that such products are available.

Audiology supplies to the wards for assistive equipment for hard-of-hearing patients, they supply a whiteboard and laminated cards.

14) What training have nurses received to ensure that individuals with hearing loss are not discriminated against?

A free basic Deaf Awareness Training session was provided to all staff as a one-off session, which around 20 staff attended this across clinical and non-clinical roles.

There is currently no training offered, Patient Engagement have been working with Hearing Loss Cornwall to put together deaf awareness training; however, to roll this out the programme comes at a cost. This is on the agenda for health inequalities meeting to establish where the ownership of this training would sit and how it may be funded, as EDI/OD team is a workforce team.

15) What training has been provided to ensure all staff comply with NHS England's Accessible Information Standards?

The CITS Training team provide Microsoft Application (Word and PowerPoint) instructor led training to staff in RCHT. Training is not mandatory but those who create presentations or word documents for the document library are advised to attend. We also have a dedicated Accessibility guides webpage signposts staff to the NHS Service Manual.

[Accessibility Guides \(cornwall.nhs.uk\)](https://cornwall.nhs.uk) - only accessible to staff with NHS Mail account or those with a training account.

16) Regarding intercom systems at entry points, do the speakers have a T setting that enables those with hearing aids to hear clearly? What provisions are in place for individuals who are profoundly deaf and use BSL as their first language when using these systems?

RCHT are unable to provide an answer to this question without undertaking additional survey.

17) There has previously been introduced a three-push buzzer system to indicate a hearing loss for those unable to use the intercom; where have the signs instructing deaf individuals to use this method gone? During a recent visit to RCHT, however, staff members that they were unaware of this system.

Some wards have a poster but an review and update is required. Staff members are aware of the 3-push buzzer system.

18) I know that the three-push buzzer system is now outdated, as the door release button's click sound is no longer audible. Could you provide details on this issue?

Work is underway with the eCare Project Team to ensure letter templates in the new eCare system comply with relevant standards.

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Work is underway with the eCare Project Team to ensure letter templates in the new eCare system comply with relevant standards.

20) I would like to know when these letters and informational sheets will be made fully accessible in accordance with the legislation mentioned.

The date for eCare to go live is yet to be confirmed.

21) Additionally, I request copies of the internal Access Audit for the entire RCHT from 2010 to the present, including the new hospital and the one that has been built at Penrice Hospital St Austell, and Access Statements.

Recent audit was completed during 2024 but the reporting is not yet complete. The most recent audit provided information on RCHT external site only and can be provided. It is not clear what is meant by Penrice Hospital, as this is not part of RCHT estate unless this refers to the Penrice Birthing Unit. The St Austell Elective Surgical Hub is owned by CFT (Cornwall Foundation Trust), so outside of RCHT scope for an access audit.

Attachment(s):

None.

Date Response sent: 04/10/2024