

Freedom of Information Office
Press and Communications
Seventh Floor, Salton House
St Mary's Hospital
South Wharf Road
London W2 1NY
020 3312 5585
imperial.foi@nhs.net

14 January 2021

Our ref: FOI-562-2020

Dear Dr Minh Alexander,

Thank you for your Freedom of Information request.

I have carefully reviewed your request and investigated whether there is any information available for disclosure to you. Please find below the Trust's response:

1. Please advise of all legal expenses incurred to date, including advice obtained, in the Trust's response to the CQC Regulation 5 Fit and Proper Person Issues raised about Paula Vennells Trust Chair.

Total legal fees incurred to date: £6,880.09.

2. Please advise who has been commissioned to conduct the announced external review into these issues, and disclose a copy of the contract for this piece of work.

Paula Vennells tendered her resignation from Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust on 30 November 2020. In light of this, and bearing in mind the cost of the investigation and the fact that it is unlikely to report before 31 March, we propose to not go ahead with the review as planned.

3. Please advise if this work has commenced and what is the scheduled timetable for the work.

Please see above.

4. Please advise if the Trust has been in possession of the following letter of 24 June 2020 by Paula Vennells to BEIS parliamentary select committee

<https://minhalexander.files.wordpress.com/2020/12/letter-from-paula-vennells-to-beis-commuittee-24-june-2020-.pdf>

If so, please advise when the Trust came into possession of the copy of this letter.

Yes, the Trust received a copy of this letter from Paula Vennells following her submission of it to the parliamentary select committee.

6. Please advise if the trust has contributed to any legal expenses incurred in the drafting of this letter. If so, please disclose details including the amount contributed by the trust.

The Trust has not contributed to any legal expenses incurred in the drafting of his letter.

7. Please advise which trust directors were party to the drafting of the pre-prepared statement read out by Gerald Acher the trust's deputy Chair at the trust AGM on 15 July 2020:

"Gerald Acher: "Thank you. Thank you very much indeed Paula. Mr Wilson thank you for your question. Indeed no one could follow what has happened to many of the sub postmasters using the Horizon system without being profoundly moved. But when Paula was appointed by NHS Improvement just over a year ago, she was open about the ongoing Horizon issues during her time at the Post Office. And following the Post Office legal ruling and settlement at the end of 2019 and subsequent developments our board has reviewed the situation carefully and thoroughly. All of the information we have remains in line with what was understood by NHS Improvement at the time of Paula's appointment in April 2019 and the board has no additional insights into the complexities of the Post Office issues over the past 20 years.

And we are only able to draw on our own direct experience of Paula's conduct and contribution to this trust which has been entirely positive. Thank you Paula, back to you."

<https://www.postofficetrial.com/2020/10/it-was-nothing-to-do-with-me-guv.html>

Was Paula Vennells one of the Trust directors involved in the drafting of the above pre-prepared statement which Mr Acher read out at the AGM on 15 July 2020?

Was NHS Improvement party to the drafting of Mr Acher's pre-prepared statement?

The answer draws on a wider briefing for board members developed by the Trust's communications department as preparation for the Trust's AGM. This particular outline response was developed with input from board members, though not the chair. As with preparation for previous AGMs, the briefing was shared with NHS England London, as well as with all board members.

I trust that this deals with your enquiry to your satisfaction, but if you feel that Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust has misunderstood or not responded appropriately to your request, you have two courses of action:

- You can clarify the terms of your original request to allow this to be looked at again (if you expand your request this will be dealt with as a new request)
- All applicants have the right of appeal. An appeal should be focused on the original request and should identify how the Trust's response failed to answer your information request. Appeals must be made in writing to the FOI Manager at the address above.

After the Trust's internal appeals procedure has been exhausted, a further appeal about the same information request can be directed to the Information Commissioner for adjudication. Appeals to the Information Commissioner should be sent for review to the following address:

The Information Commissioner,
Wycliffe House, Water Lane,
Wilmslow Cheshire
SK9 5AF
Telephone: 01625 545 700
Facsimile: 01625 545510
E-mail: mail@ico.gsi.gov.uk

Please note:

If you are considering re-using the information disclosed to you through this request, for any purpose outside of what could be considered for personal use, you are required under the Re-use of Public Sector Information Regulations 2015 to make an application for re-use to the organisation you have requested the information from. Applications for re-use should be directed to the Trust through the FOI manager.

Please contact me again, quoting your reference number, if you require any further assistance with your current request and I will do my best to provide the relevant help and advice.

Yours sincerely

Barney Langrish
Freedom of Information manager