

## PRESS STATEMENT

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Approved by: Phil Woodford, Associate Director of Corporate Affairs,  
UHMBT,  
Issued by: Karen Gardner: Karen.gardner@uhmbt.nhs.uk  
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Phil Woodford, Associate Director of Corporate Affairs, University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay NHS Foundation Trust, said: The Trust, like all other public bodies, is subject to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000. This enables members of the public to request information from public authorities; however, certain information is legally exempt.

“The Trust receives hundreds of FOI requests per month. In order to comply with the law, we do occasionally seek specialist legal advice. We incur such fees all year round, as we do not employ a lawyer in-house to advise us on these requests.

“The fees incurred in relation to FOI requests were to advise on the laws relating to personal and sensitive patient and employee data. People’s personal data, is just that – personal. Our patients and colleagues have every right to expect us to look after their data with care and in accordance with the law.

Phil went onto say “ In respect of legal fees for advice regarding the book ‘Whistle in the Wind’ we estimate that we will spend no more than £3,000. Serious patient safety concerns and other allegations about the Trust and some of its employees have been made in the book. To understand any potential legal implications we therefore commissioned some limited legal advice.

Phil concludes: “We have a duty to ensure we spend tax payers’ money



wisely and I am confident we have only commissioned such specialist legal advice concerning FOI request's where it has been necessary. The potential fine incurred as a result of us of breaching the Data Protection Act, could far outweigh any money we have spent on specialist legal advice."

**ENDS**

**Notes to editors:**

1. For further information, please contact the communications team on 01539 716 675 or by email as indicated above.
  2. The NHS turned 70 on 5 July 2018. It's the perfect opportunity to celebrate the achievements of one of the nation's most loved institutions and to thank the extraordinary NHS staff - who are always there to care for local communities. More information on NHS70 can be found at: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/nhs70/>.
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