

24 November 2022

Claims that the NI Protocol delayed heart surgery

Request

Under the Freedom of Information Act, I would like to request details of correspondence relating to press queries about DUP MP Sir Jeffrey Donaldson's claims that the NI Protocol delayed heart surgery.

More details on this can be found here:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-63479162>

Please disclose the following for the period from October 27 2022 to present:

1. A copy of all correspondence sent and received, internally and externally (redacted where appropriate if necessary), by the communications team in relation to media queries about Sir Jeffrey's comments.
2. A copy of all text or WhatsApp messages sent and received, internally and externally (redacted where appropriate if necessary), on communications staff work devices in relation to media queries about Sir Jeffrey's comments.

Response

1. Please find all internal and external correspondence attached as requested.

You will notice we have redacted some Belfast Trust staff names as we are not able to provide personal information under the Freedom of Information Act. This information is subject to Section 40(2) of the FOI Act 2000 – Personal information relating to a third party. This is deemed to be personal information about another individual and disclosure would breach one or more of the principles of the Data Protection Act.

It is the protocol of Belfast Trust to make public the names of employees of a senior standing – i.e. Band 8A and above. Those who fall below that band are exempt and so their names have been redacted.

We have also redacted the names/identifiers of those staff within other lower positions who are not employees of the Belfast Trust.

2. We do not hold any WhatsApp messages relating to this subject.