

Ref: FOI/GS/ID 6935

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22 September 2021

## **Freedom of Information Act 2000**

I am writing in response to your request for information made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 in relation to Neonatal care unit access complaints, Covid-19

*You asked:*

*Could you please tell me, between March 1st 2020 and the date of this email (02/09/2021)?*

*1) How many comments through the patient advice and liaison system (PALS)\*, as well as official complaints, has your Trust received from patients complaining about limited access to neonatal care units as a result of COVID-19 restrictions?*

*Please do this by searching for complaints containing any of the words "neonatal", "covid", "covid-19", "coronavirus", "incubator", "baby".*

*2) Can you select the five most recent complaints and provide me with the following details:*

*a) a summary of the complaint (e.g., a couple whose baby spent two weeks in an incubator following premature birth complained about not being allowed to enter the neonatal care unit together and for only a limited number of hours per day)*

*b) the exact wording of the complaint, with redactions to remove potentially identifying information*

*c) what action the Trust took in response*

Trust response:

Due to the volume of the suggested search criteria it has not been possible to interrogate the system as this would be unmanageable.

The table below outlines both the comment raised via PALS and the complaint raised during this period.

PALS/formal complaint	Summary	Exact wording	Action taken in response
1. PALS	Father of baby in neonatal unit unhappy with visiting times and that his wife is allowed to see baby all day and he is only allowed 2 hours	Concern was raised verbally with a member of PALS staff therefore there is no 'exact wording' to provide.	Directorate confirmed that as per visiting policy currently father of baby is allowed no more than 2 hours and that these two hours must be taken as one slot and cannot be broken up. Apologies were offered.
2. Formal complaint	Father of baby in neonatal unit only had limited visiting access, while mother of baby had free access to unit.	<p>████████████████████  ████████████████████  ████████████████████  ████████████████████ Our child was in this ward for 3 days, where unfortunately my partner was only allowed a 2-hour booked time slot to see him per day, but I was allowed to visit whenever I liked simply because I am the mother ██████████  ████████████████████ The second day in neonatal, my partner wheel-chaired me down ██████████  ████████████████████ where he was invited in, even though he had a slot booked for 1-3pm. Upon his arrival at 1pm, he was sent away as he had already been down that morning for 30 minutes ██████████. We found this very upsetting, as my partner didn't have a cuddle with our baby during those 30 minutes and couldn't see him until the next day; bearing in mind our baby was unwell.'</p>	Apologies were offered. It was explained that advice on visiting arrangements was sought from the neonatal network and BAPM.

Please note the Trust did not have five complaints on this subject within the timeframe requested.