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Freedom of Information Act Disclosure log - Reply Extract

Introduction

The Trust has a social media policy. It can be located here:

<https://www.plymouthhospitals.nhs.uk/trust-policies>

Our key messages are

Social media is increasingly a part of many of our personal and professional lives. There are no hard and fast rules about how to use it, but there are some considerations. Overall, the way you behave on social media is simply an extension of your behaviour in the real world.

At all times you must respect and uphold patient confidentiality, respect your colleagues and act with dignity and professionalism when using social media, even in a personal capacity.

Advice and support is provided by the Communications team.

You asked

- 1. How many employees have been investigated for social media breaches in the calendar years 2014, 2015 and 2016? Could I have the figures broken down by year please?**

2014: 12

2015: 6

2016: Five or fewer

- 2. What position do/did they hold?**

The Trust cannot provide any figures without identifying numbers fewer than five.

The majority of incidents related to Registered Nurses/Midwives.

We investigated five or fewer other staff groups.

3. Why they were investigated?

Allegations of inappropriate comments being posted on Social Media.

4. The outcome of the investigation?

The Trust cannot provide specific figures on the numbers of each type of warning without identifying numbers fewer than five.

We can however advise you that in 2014 most resulted in either an informal warning or a first or final formal warning.

In 2015 and 2016, all incidents have resulted in first or final formal written warnings.

It must be noted that if an individual had previously been subject to allegations of a similar nature that had been upheld, this may have led to escalation through the warning process. Therefore, the outcomes listed above could be more serious based on the existence of previous warnings as opposed to the seriousness of the specific incident investigated.

In addition, investigations may include a number of allegations against an individual, and therefore any outcome may not solely relate to a social media breach.

Legal notes

Plymouth Hospitals NHS Trust is confirming in accordance with section 1 (a) of the Act that it holds the information requested and is supplying it in accordance with section 1(b) unless otherwise specified.

Please find the answers to your questions noting that we have redacted the data set where numbers are five or fewer or providing a higher number will allow for the identification of numbers of five or fewer. This avoids a breach of the first two Data Protection Act principles. This is in accordance with section 40.-(2)(a) and (b) by virtue of section 40.-(3)(a)(i), the personal information exemption as described in the Freedom of Information Act. A detailed rationale is provided in the attached document L4.