Torbay and South Devon
NHS Foundation Trust

Email: foi.tsdft@nhs.net
Our Ref: TSD10922

23 October 2026

Dear Sir/Madam

Request for Information

We are writing to confirm that we have now completed our search for the information you requested.

A copy of the information is below:

I am writing to request information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 regarding occupational noise exposure and hearing-loss prevention in orthopaedic operating theatres within your Trust.

Published research has identified potentially hazardous noise exposure associated with orthopaedic power tools, including oscillating saws, drills and other powered surgical instruments. I am seeking to understand how NHS Trusts assess and manage this occupational risk.
Please provide the following information as held by the Trust at the date of this request.

1. Occupational noise risk assessment

a. **Does the Trust have a documented occupational noise risk assessment that specifically covers orthopaedic operating theatres or orthopaedic surgical procedures?**
   No

b. **If yes, please provide a copy of the most recent assessment, including its date and the date of its most recent review.**
   Not applicable

c. **If no orthopaedic-specific assessment exists, does the Trust have a general operating-theatre noise risk assessment that includes orthopaedic staff and procedures? If so, please provide a copy.**
   No

d. **If neither exists, please confirm this.**
   Nether exists

2. Scope and methodology of the assessment

If an assessment exists, please confirm, where this information is recorded:

a. **Whether the assessment includes surgeons, surgical trainees, scrub practitioners and other relevant theatre staff.**
   Not applicable

b. **Whether it includes procedures involving powered orthopaedic instruments, including oscillating saws, drills, reamers and powered burrs.**
   Not applicable

c. **Whether occupational noise measurements or personal noise dosimetry have been undertaken, and, if so, when and in which clinical areas or procedures.**
   Not applicable

d. **Whether the assessment considers daily or weekly personal noise exposure and peak sound-pressure levels in accordance with the Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005.**

e. Not applicable

3. Risk management and hearing protection

a. **Has the Trust identified orthopaedic theatre staff as being at risk of occupational noise-induced hearing loss?**
   No. However, every member of staff completes a health and safety assessment as part of their annual appraisal, providing the opportunity to raise such concerns.

b. **What control measures are documented as being in place to reduce occupational noise exposure in orthopaedic theatres?**
   No documented measures

c. **Is hearing protection provided or required for staff undertaking procedures involving powered orthopaedic instruments? If so, please provide any relevant written policy or guidance.**
   Not provided

d. **Has the Trust implemented any formal training or staff guidance concerning occupational noise exposure and hearing-loss prevention in orthopaedic theatres? If so, please provide the relevant document or policy.**
   No

4. Occupational health and audiometric surveillance

a. **Does the Trust have a policy or protocol for audiometric surveillance of staff exposed to occupational noise in orthopaedic theatres?**
   No

b. **If so, please provide a copy of the relevant policy or protocol, including any documented criteria for referral, baseline audiometry and periodic hearing checks.**
   Not applicable

c. **Is audiometric surveillance specifically offered to orthopaedic surgeons or other orthopaedic theatre staff on the basis of their occupational noise exposure? Please provide any relevant written policy or guidance.**
   No

5. Responsibility and review

a. **Which department or role is responsible for assessing and managing occupational noise exposure in orthopaedic operating theatres (for example, Health and Safety, Occupational Health, or Theatre Management)?**
   In the event that a concern is raised around occupational noise exposure, the relevant Manager would escalate any such concern to the Health and Safety Team for further task evaluation and assessment, and the Occupational Health team for individual assessment.

b. **Has the Trust documented any review, audit or action plan concerning occupational noise exposure or noise-induced hearing loss in orthopaedic theatres during the past five years? If so, please provide copies of the relevant reports or action plans.**
   No

The information supplied to you continues to be protected by the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988. You are free to use it for your own purposes, including any non-commercial research you are doing and for the purposes of news reporting.

If you wish to discuss any of the above, please contact us, quoting the FOI reference number above.

If you are unhappy with the way in which we have handled your request, please contact the Data Protection and Freedom of Information Lead in the first instance. If you wish to make a formal complaint, you should write to our Information Governance Team at Information Governance and Data Protection, Belmont Court, Torbay and South Devon NHS Foundation Trust, Torquay, TQ2 7AA or by email to tsdft.igteam@nhs.net

If you are not content with the outcome of your complaint or the internal review, you may apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Generally, the Information Commissioner will only make a decision once you have exhausted the complaints and/or

internal review process provided by us. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: The Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF or through this link https://ico.org.uk/global/contact-us/

Yours sincerely,

Freedom of Information Team