

Human Tissue Authority
151 Buckingham Palace Road
London
SW1W 9SZ

[REDACTED]

By email to [REDACTED]

Tel 020 7269 1900
Web www.hta.gov.uk
Email enquiries@hta.gov.uk
Date 31 January 2019

Dear [REDACTED]

Freedom of Information request

Thank you for your request for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), which was received by the Human Tissue Authority (HTA) on 10 January 2019. Your email outlined the following request:

Hello,

I'd like to request the following information under the FOI Act.

I would like this information broken down ANNUALLY for the years 2016, 2017 and 2018.

- 1) How many 'serious incidents' in morgues have there been for the years specified?
- 2) What are the details of these 'serious incidents' for each of these years and how many of each: eg 'accidental damage to bodies', 'missing body parts', 'the wrong body released to families' 'failure to dispose of organs and tissues'?
- 3) If possible, I would like specific examples of these incidents, for example: At Warwick Hospital an undertaker found a brain in the abdominal cavity of a body which did not belong to it. (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-42500457>)
- 4) How many reports of concerns regarding organ harvesting have you received?

If, for some reason, you are unable to answer all of these questions, please answer as many as possible within the legally specified time and cost limit. If you have any questions, please call me on [REDACTED].

Response

In response to item 1 of your request, I would advise you that the HTA refers to serious incidents in mortuaries as Human Tissue Authority Reportable Incidents (HTARIs). I can confirm that the number of HTARIs reported to and closed by the HTA is set out in the table below:

Year	HTARIs reported to and closed by the HTA during by (calendar) years
2016	83
2017	95
2018	75

In accordance with section 21 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the information that you have requested under items 2 and 3 is exempt from disclosure, as this information is easily accessible by other means. This is because the information that you have requested is covered under previous freedom of information requests. I am pleased to advise however, that the information which you have requested can be obtained from the HTA website via the hyperlinks set out below.

HTARIs reported and closed during 2016:

<https://www.hta.gov.uk/sites/default/files/HTA%20FOI%20response%2010%2002%202017%20HTARI%202013.pdf>

HTARIs reported and closed during 2017:

<https://www.hta.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Freedom%20of%20Information%20Request%20Response%20Letter%20-%2023%20January%2018.pdf>

HTARIs reported and closed during 2018:

https://www.hta.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Freedom%20of%20Information%20Request%20Response%20Letter_1.pdf

Further to item 3. The information set out above contains specific details of incidents in a summarised format. The HTA does hold the specific details of individual HTARIs but we have formed the view that provision of such reports in their entirety is exempt from disclosure by virtue of s31 (1) (g) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. It is the HTA's policy that disclosing these reports in full would prejudice the exercise by the Authority of its functions for certain specified purposes. Those specified purposes include the purpose of "ascertaining whether circumstances which would justify regulatory action in pursuance of any enactment exist or may arise". The HTA's functions, which are set out in general terms at section 15 of the HT Act, include superintending compliance with requirements under Part 1 of the Act and with Codes of Practice made under the Act.

In response to item 4 of your request, The HTA licences and inspects 36 establishments across the UK that undertake transplantation of solid organs.

During the period requested, the HTA has received no reports of concerns regarding organ harvesting.

Further information

If you are unhappy with the way the HTA has handled your request for information in this case, you may in the first instance ask us for an internal review by writing to us at the above postal or email address.

If you remain dissatisfied with the handling of your request or complaint, you have the right to appeal directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision, at the address below. There is no charge for making an appeal.

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire SK9 5AF

Telephone: 08456 30 60 60 or 01625 54 57 45
Website: www.ico.gov.uk

Yours sincerely

