

Freedom of Information Request

Reference Number: [EPUT.FOI.19.1131](#)
Date Received: [26th June 2019](#)

Information Requested:

I am writing to make a request for all the information to which I am entitled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Could I possibly suggest that you direct these questions towards one or some of the following Trust employees: - IM&T, IT technical lead, HR Director, Chief Operating Officer, COO, Director of Innovation, Director of Transformation, CFO, CIO.

(NB - In order to better explain the terminology used on these FOI questions, IA/ RPA refers to a style of automation where computer software mimics a human's interaction with application software in completing rules based tasks and processes. It is considered to provide a highly scalable virtual workforce that completes the repetitive tasks humans normally undertake. The general consensus is that this releases human employees from tedious tasks to instead focus on deeper cognitive thinking, investigative analysis and decision making. At a time of reduced workforce capacity, we are interested in the views of NHS organisations as regards employing a digital workforce using IA/ RPA to free up precious staff time)

Please you please answer the following:

1. Does your organization presently use and/or endorse a RPA/IA (*description of this detailed above*) to automate manual, rule-based processes?

No

If the answer is **NO** –

- 1.1 Is RPA/IA something that the organisation would consider (within the next 2 years) as a way of supporting reduced human resource capacity & to improve repeatable business outcomes?

Yes

- 1.2 If the organisation is **not** considering RPA technology – is there a reason why this is not being considered? – [N/A](#)

- Perceived expense
- Concerns about how existing administrative staff would accept this
- This is the first time we have heard about RPA/ IA
- Other reason (please feel free to comment)

If the answer is **YES** – RPA/IA is **currently being used** in the organisation - could you please detail –

- 1.3.1 The system type/name/supplier
- 1.3.2 What it is used for (or has been used for) and by what department, examples below;
- Outpatient Services
 - Data Migration
 - Improving Referral to Treatment (RTT) processes
 - Onboarding / Off-Boarding staff
 - Back office / Finance related process automations
 - Other (please comment) –
- 1.3.3 How did the existing human workforce react to tasks being replaced by automation?
- Good, they welcome the changes
 - Bad, they felt threatened
 - Indifferent
 - Not sure – no feedback
 - Other – please comment
- 1.3.4 when did your RPA/ IA system come into use and when does the contract expire?
- 1.3.5 How much does this new technology cost the organisation & if applicable, how many robots are employed?
- 1.3.6 Has there been any analysis of the system, (&/or case studies) to demonstrate any benefits so far- either operationally, financially or as regards patient safety/management?
2. Who is the main person(s)/ decision maker (s)or team – who would probably be responsible (or is responsible) for the decision to use RPA/IA in your organization? - Name/title/ contact details

[Sue Balmford, Deputy Director of IT and Performance – sue.balmford@nhs.net](mailto:sue.balmford@nhs.net)

I would like the above information to be provided to me as an email response.

If this request is too wide or unclear, I would be grateful if you could contact me as I understand that under the Act, you are required to advise and assist requesters. If any of this information is already in the public domain, please can you direct me to it, with page references and URLs if necessary.

If the release of any of this information is prohibited on the grounds of breach of confidence, I ask that you supply me with copies of the confidentiality agreement and remind you that information should not be treated as confidential if such an agreement has not been signed.

I understand that you are required to respond to my request within the 20 working days after you receive this letter. I would be grateful if you could confirm in writing that you have received this request.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Publication Scheme:

As part of the Freedom of Information Act all public organisations are required to proactively publish certain classes of information on a Publication Scheme. A publication scheme is a guide to the information that is held by the organisation. EPUT's Publication Scheme is located on its Website at the following link <https://eput.nhs.uk/>