**Pontprennau Medical Centre FOI and EIR Procedure**

**Introduction**

This document outlines the procedure and guidance for handling Freedom of Information (FOI) and Environmental Information Request (EIR) within Pontprennau Medical Centre. The practice is committed to transparency and compliance with relevant legislation, including the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIR).

**Definitions**

Freedom of Information (FOI): The right to request access to information held by public authorities, including GP practices, under the FOIA.

Environmental Information Request (EIR): The right to request access to environmental information held by public authorities under the EIR.

**Responsibilities**

Practice Manager/FOI Officer

- Designated as the primary point of contact for FOI and EIR requests.

- Responsible for ensuring compliance with FOIA and EIR regulations.

- Oversees the handling of FOI and EIR requests, including coordination, response, and record-keeping.

- Provides guidance and support to staff members on FOI and EIR matters.

**Clinical and Administrative Staff**

Promptly forward any FOI or EIR requests received to the Practice Manager/FOI Officer.

Assist in gathering requested information as necessary and providing accurate and timely responses.

**Handling FOI and EIR Requests**

Receiving Requests

- Any member of staff who receives an FOI or EIR request must immediately forward it to the Practice Manager/FOI Officer.

- Requests must be acknowledged promptly upon receipt, and a response provided within statutory timeframes.

**Processing Requests**

- The Practice Manager/FOI Officer will review each request to determine its validity and scope.

- Identify the requested information and the relevant records or documents within the practice's possession.

- Ensure that any personal or sensitive information is handled in accordance with data protection regulations.

**Responding to Requests**

- Provide a written response to the requester within 20 working days, as required by FOIA and EIR regulations.

- If unable to respond within the statutory timeframe, notify the requester promptly and provide an estimated date for the response.

- Ensure that responses are clear, accurate, and address all aspects of the request to the best of the practice's ability.

**Exemptions and Exceptions**

- Consider whether any exemptions or exceptions apply to the requested information under FOIA or EIR regulations.

- Where applicable, provide explanations for any refusal or partial disclosure of information, citing relevant exemptions or exceptions.

**Assistance**

-The practice manager/FOI Officer will seek assistance and advice from the DPO service during this process.

**Record-keeping**

Maintain records of all FOI and EIR requests received, including the date of receipt, nature of the request, actions taken, and responses provided.

Ensure that records are stored securely and retained in accordance with data protection and retention policies.

**Training and Awareness**

Provide training and guidance to staff members on their responsibilities and obligations under FOIA and EIR regulations.

Raise awareness of FOI and EIR procedures and promote a culture of transparency and compliance within the practice.

**Review and Monitoring**

Regularly review FOI and EIR procedures to ensure they remain up-to-date and compliant with regulatory requirements.

Monitor the handling of FOI and EIR requests to identify areas for improvement and implement corrective actions as necessary.

**Contact Information**

For any inquiries or assistance regarding FOI and EIR requests, please contact the Practice Manager/FOI Officer.

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**Approval and Adoption**

This policy was approved and adopted by the management of Pontprennau Medical Centre on:

Date of Last Review: January 2025

Next Review Date: January 2026

This procedure and guidance outline the high-level responsibilities and processes for handling Freedom of Information (FOI) and Environmental Information Request (EIR) within the GP practice, ensuring compliance with relevant legislation and promoting transparency in information disclosure.