

## Birthing Pain Relief - Nitrous Oxide

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Reference Number: RDF1646-23

Date of Response: 18/08/23

Further to your Freedom of Information Act request, please find the Trust's response(s) below:

Please be aware that the Royal Devon University Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust (Royal Devon) has existed since 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022 following the integration of the Northern Devon Healthcare NHS Trust (known as Northern Services) and the Royal Devon and Exeter NHS Foundation Trust (known as Eastern Services).

*This is a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. My request relates to the use of nitrous oxide in healthcare settings.*

*I would like to request the following information:*

- 1. Since 2018 until now, how many complaints have you had about potential excessive exposure to Nitrous Oxide via Entonox and prolonged exposure of staff to high levels of nitrous oxide? Please provide these figures broken down year-by-year eg. 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023 so far.*

Answer: None.

- 2. Have you ever suspended the use of Entonox or any other inhaled as an inhalation analgesic for women in labour in either hospital setting or at home births? If so, please state how many times per year its use has been suspended since the first suspension was recorded.*

Answer: No.

- 3. On average, how long has the use of Entonox been suspended for?*

Answer: Not applicable, please see the response to question 2.

- 4. Have you currently suspended or removed Entonox as an inhalation analgesic for women in Labour in either hospital setting or at home births, or are you planning to in the future?*

Answer: Not suspended currently and no plans to suspend at present.

- 5. Do you have ventilation/scavenger units to remove Entonox in your maternity unit? If yes, how old are the ventilation/scavenger systems on the maternity wards and when they last updated/repared?*

Answer: Royal Devon's Northern Services: Yes, serviced annually, last serviced 06/02/23. Eastern Services: No, there are not scavenging units for this purpose, however the Trust are currently looking into this provision.

- 6. On average, how much exposure do maternity staff have to Entonox in a week and how often do you monitor the levels?*

Answer: Levels are not currently monitored; however, we have recently received costings for this to be monitored and are looking to instigate this.

7. *Have you had any staff who have been exposed to Entonox in excess of the Workplace Exposure Limit (WEL) of 100ppm (eight-hour time weighted average) under COSHH Regulations 2002, and what were the levels of exposure?*

Answer: Not that we are aware of currently, however monitoring will commence shortly.

8. *Is there currently any legal action involving your staff in relation to this?*

Answer: No.