

Request under Freedom of Information Act 2000 – our ref: FOI 19/20_306

I write in response to your request under the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act, which was as follows:

Please answer the following questions for the time period 2016-17, 2017-18, and 2018-19. Please break down answers by year.

- *How many prescriptions have been issued within your trust for books and magazines? Examples of the sorts of books/magazines that may be prescribed might be (but should not be limited to in your response) self-help books or lifestyle and health magazines.*
- *What has been the total cost of these book/magazine prescriptions within each year?*
- *What were the five most prescribed books across the requested period?*
- *What were the five most prescribed magazines across the requested period?*

For further clarification: when I use the phrase prescribing/prescription I do not refer exclusively to the traditional practice of taking a prescription slip to a pharmacy or similar. Rather, I use the term to refer to any instances of the above being purchased for patients by the trust (whether on a temporary or permanent basis).

The Trust does not hold the information you request. In the interest of advising and assisting you with your request: books and magazines are not ‘prescribed’ in the usual sense and therefore data could not be sourced via Pharmacy records. Clinicians might recommend books to patients – for example, there is an NHS scheme called [Reading Well](#) with self-help books for people experiencing mental health issues and/or the effects of long-term illness - but such books would be recommended to patients who would then borrow them for free from public libraries (or if they prefer, purchase the books themselves) and therefore, there would be no spend by the Trust.

Given that much self-help literature is targeted at mental health, it might be also helpful if I flag that this is a district general hospital and that the main provider of mental health service provision locally is Northamptonshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust ([NHFT](#)).

While I cannot state that the Trust has never purchased a book or magazine for patient use, this would be a relatively unusual occurrence and data on this would not be held.

