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www.secamb.nhs.uk

Dear

The trust acknowledges receipt of your Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) request, referenced above. Please ensure you quote this number in any future correspondence.

FOI Request

You asked us:

- 1. How many reports of misuse and abuse of 999 call handlers were recorded by the service in the year 2023, 2024 and so far in 2025?**
- 2. How much did hoax calls / misuse / non-emergencies cost the ambulance service in the year 2023,2024 and so far in 2025?**

Formal Response

The Trust confirms it holds part of the information you have requested.

- 1. How many reports of misuse and abuse of 999 call handlers were recorded by the service in the year 2023, 2024 and so far in 2025?**

Abusive Call Reporting – Important Context

The figures below reflect only those abusive calls that were formally escalated by call handlers. As such, they do not represent the full extent of service misuse, and should be interpreted with this limitation in mind.

2023: 93 incidents
2024: 85 incidents
2025 (up to 21 July): 50 incidents

Due to the nature of reporting and escalation processes, many instances of inappropriate or abusive behaviour may go unrecorded unless formally flagged, meaning the actual volume of misuse is likely higher.



2. How much did hoax calls / misuse / non-emergencies cost the ambulance service in the year 2023,2024 and so far in 2025?

Hoax Call Cost Implications – Reporting Limitations

Due to the inherent complexities involved, it is not possible to provide specific figures relating to the cost implications of responding to hoax calls. These complexities include, but are not limited to:

- The unpredictable nature of ambulance misplacement
- Variable operational costs such as fuel consumption, staffing requirements, and delays in patient handovers
- The impact on Emergency Medical Advisors (EMAs), which is typically unrecorded unless the caller is identified as a frequent offender

In instances involving repeat hoax callers, mitigation strategies are implemented by our Frequent Caller team. However, the associated resource usage and operational impact remain difficult to quantify due to the wide range of influencing factors.

Next steps

Please note you will be able to source a lot of information which is made available on our website.

Should you be dissatisfied with our response then in the first instance please contact Richard Banks, Head of Corporate Governance, via the following email address: FOI@secamb.nhs.uk

You can ask us to review our original response. If you would like us to carry out an internal review, please let us know within 40 working days of you receiving our original response. This review will be conducted by an individual who was not directly involved in reviewing the original response, ordinarily, the Trust Data Protection Officer.

We will endeavour to complete this request within 20 working days.

Should you remain dissatisfied then you can contact the [Information Commissioner's Office](#) (ICO). Complaints to the ICO should be made within six weeks of receiving the outcome of an internal review. The easiest way to lodge a complaint is through their website: www.ico.org.uk/foicomplaints.

Alternatively, the ICO's postal address is:
Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, SK9 5AF.

Yours sincerely,

Freedom of Information Coordinator
South East Coast Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust



Saving Lives,
Serving Our Communities

Chair: Michael Whitehouse CEO: Simon Weldon