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Crawley
West Sussex
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Internal Ref: 250825
Email:

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:

I am writing under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to request the following information from the South East Coast Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust (SECAMB):

- 1. Number of private taxis dispatched instead of ambulances**
 - Please provide the total number of private taxis dispatched to locations in Kent following a 999 or urgent medical help call, for the following periods:
 - 1 August 2022 – 31 July 2023
 - 1 August 2023 – 31 July 2024
 - 1 August 2024 – 31 July 2025
- 2. Breakdown by call categorisation**

Where available, please break these figures down by the following NHS call categories:

 - **Category 1 (C1):** Life-threatening injuries and illnesses, specifically cardiac arrest
 - **Category 2 (C2):** Emergency calls, such as stroke patients
 - **Category 3 (C3):** Urgent calls such as abdominal pain, where patients may be treated at home
 - **Category 4 (C4):** Less urgent calls such as diarrhoea, vomiting, or back pain



3. Reasons for dispatching a taxi (1 August 2024 – 31 July 2025 only)
For this most recent period, please also state the reasons recorded for dispatching a taxi rather than an ambulance, and how many times each reason was given. For example (non-exhaustive list):

- Chest pain / chest discomfort (non-traumatic)
- Falls
- Haemorrhage (bleeding) / lacerations
- Heart problems
- Overdose / poisoning (ingestion)
- Mental health problems / suicide attempt
- Convulsions / fitting
- Pregnancy / childbirth / miscarriage
- Carbon monoxide / inhalation
- Electrocutation / lightning

4. Geographical breakdown

Where possible, please break down the number of taxi dispatches by the local authority area where the patient was located:

- Ashford
- Canterbury
- Dartford
- Dover
- Folkestone and Hythe
- Gravesham
- Maidstone
- Medway
- Sevenoaks
- Swale
- Thanet
- Tonbridge and Malling
- Tunbridge Wells

5. Contracts with private taxi firms

- Please confirm whether SECAMB currently has any contracts in place with any private taxi firm(s) to provide such journeys.
- If so, please provide:
 - The name(s) of the contracted supplier(s)
 - The total value of the contract(s)

Formal Response

The Trust confirms it holds part of the information you have requested. Please note, the Trust does not currently use taxis for conveying patients.



1. Number of private taxis dispatched instead of ambulances

- Please provide the total number of private taxis dispatched to locations in Kent following a 999 or urgent medical help call, for the following periods:

- 1 August 2022 – 31 July 2023

346 conveyances

- 1 August 2023 – 31 July 2024

0

- 1 August 2024 – 31 July 2025

0

2. Breakdown by call categorisation

Where available, please break these figures down by the following NHS call categories:

- a. Category 1 (C1): Life-threatening injuries and illnesses, specifically cardiac arrest
- b. Category 2 (C2): Emergency calls, such as stroke patients
- c. Category 3 (C3): Urgent calls such as abdominal pain, where patients may be treated at home
- d. Category 4 (C4): Less urgent calls such as diarrhoea, vomiting, or back pain

The data collected from Incidents where taxis were used did not include the call categorisation so cannot provide this.

3. Reasons for dispatching a taxi (1 August 2024 – 31 July 2025 only)

For this most recent period, please also state the reasons recorded for dispatching a taxi rather than an ambulance, and how many times each reason was given. For example (non-exhaustive list):

- a. Chest pain / chest discomfort (non-traumatic)
- b. Falls
- c. Haemorrhage (bleeding) / lacerations
- d. Heart problems
- e. Overdose / poisoning (ingestion)
- f. Mental health problems / suicide attempt
- g. Convulsions / fitting
- h. Pregnancy / childbirth / miscarriage
- i. Carbon monoxide / inhalation
- j. Electrocutation / lightning

Taxis could be utilised for any patient who met the following criteria, their clinical presentation was not within the data that was captured:



Patients requiring definitive care in a specified facility (excludes GP/OOH)
Must have been assessed as clinically appropriate for taxi conveyance
Able to mobilise and sit in a taxi
All other self-conveyance options exhausted
Has Capacity (or accompanied by responsible adult/carer) and has consented to taxi transportation

4. Geographical breakdown

Where possible, please break down the number of taxi dispatches by the local authority area where the patient was located:

- a. Ashford
- b. Canterbury
- c. Dartford
- d. Dover
- e. Folkestone and Hythe
- f. Gravesham
- g. Maidstone
- h. Medway
- i. Sevenoaks
- j. Swale
- k. Thanet
- l. Tonbridge and Malling
- m. Tunbridge Wells

We collated taxi dispatch within our operating dispatch areas so can confirm the following:

- Medway – 98 taxi dispatches
- Paddock Wood – 78 taxi dispatches
- Ashford – 74 taxi dispatches
- Thanet – 62 taxi dispatches
- Dartford – 34 taxi dispatches

5. Contracts with private taxi firms

- a. Please confirm whether SECAMB currently has any contracts in place with any private taxi firm(s) to provide such journeys.
- b. If so, please provide:



- i. **The name(s) of the contracted supplier(s)**
- ii. **The total value of the contract(s)**
- iii.

The Trust does not currently use taxis for conveying patients.

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**