



Trust Headquarters
Nexus House
4 Gatwick Road
Crawley
West Sussex
RH10 9BG

2025
Internal Ref: 250951
Email:

Tel: 0300 123 0999
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:

The scope of the request has developed over the past few weeks and so I am detailing below some new specifics of the request if you wouldn't mind applying these to your search. In relation to the questions already sent through to you, please apply the following constraints and review the follow-up questions:

Original Request:

- 1. Financial cost of paramedic absences measured using FTE hours/days, caused by MSK disorders/injuries. Requesting this information for each of the past 5 years in the format of total cost per year, and average cost per absence.**
- 2. Number of cases of MSK disorders or injuries/number of absences caused by MSK in your paramedic workforce for each of the past 5 years.**
- 3. Your paramedic employee count for each of the past 5 years.**

Constraints:

- Only frontline paramedics**
- Only reasons S11 – back problems and S12 other musculoskeletal problems**
- We require number of FTEs (in hours/days/years but we need it to be labelled)**
 - Total FTE's available in a year (headcount)**
 - Total FTE's lost to S11 & S12**
 - Total cost spent on S11 & S12**



We can work out average cost per FTE lost

Follow up Questions:

- Can you please ensure the data provided only includes S11 (back problems) and S12 (other musculoskeletal problems), and does not include any other types of injury (i.e. S28: fracture)?
- Can you please ensure that the data on your paramedic headcount:
 - Only includes frontline paramedics
 - Is reported in terms of FTE (Full Time Equivalent in hours)?
- Can you please ensure that the data on your absences:
 - Only includes frontline paramedics
 - Is reported in terms of FTE lost (Full Time Equivalent in hours)?
- How many hours per year is a full-time, front-line paramedic contract?
- Can you please ensure that your estimation of cost is based on the average salary multiplied by the number of lost hours?

Formal Response

The Trust confirms it holds the information you requested.

1. Financial cost of paramedic absences measured using FTE hours/days, caused by MSK disorders/injuries. Requesting this information for each of the past 5 years in the format of total cost per year, and average cost per absence.

Year	FTE Days Lost	FTE Hours Lost	Estimated Total Cost	Estimated Avg Cost Per Absence
01/04/2020 - 31/03/2021	4330.95	32482.13	£457,200.42	£1,699.63
01/04/2021 - 31/03/2022	6697.52	50231.40	£704,172.56	£1,688.66
01/04/2022 - 31/03/2023	5893.98	44204.85	£656,870.02	£1,834.83
01/04/2023 - 31/03/2024	5990.83	44931.23	£626,535.63	£1,759.93
01/04/2024 - 31/03/2025	5291.31	39684.83	£655,346.90	£1,785.69

2. Number of cases of MSK disorders or injuries/number of absences caused by MSK in your paramedic workforce for each of the past 5 years

Year	Absence Occurances
01/04/2020 - 31/03/2021	269
01/04/2021 - 31/03/2022	417



01/04/2022 - 31/03/2023	358
01/04/2023 - 31/03/2024	356
01/04/2024 - 31/03/2025	367

3. Your paramedic employee count for each of the past 5 years.

Year (as at)	Headcount	FTE
31/03/2021	1,214	1117.12
31/03/2022	1,263	1159.54
31/03/2023	1,298	1185.37
31/03/2024	1,452	1328.88
31/03/2025	1,605	1457.25

Can you please ensure the data provided only includes S11 (back problems) and S12 (other musculoskeletal problems)?

Confirmed - the data provided only includes absence reasons coded as S11 (back problems) and S12 (other musculoskeletal problems).

Can you please ensure that the data on your paramedic headcount:

- **Only includes frontline paramedics**
- **Is reported in terms of FTE (Full Time Equivalent in hours)?**

Confirmed - only frontline paramedics have been included. The data is provided as both headcount and Full-Time Equivalent (FTE). The FTE figure represents the total contracted hours of all included staff, standardised to a full-time 37.5-hour working week, providing an accurate measure of total staffing capacity alongside the number of individual employees.

Can you please ensure that the data on your absences:

- **Only includes frontline paramedics**
- **Is reported in terms of FTE lost (Full Time Equivalent in hours)?**

Confirmed - only frontline paramedics have been included. The absence data is reported in terms of Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) hours lost, which represents the total number of working hours lost due to the absence reasons requested, standardised to a full-time contract. FTE hours lost are calculated by multiplying the number of FTE days lost by 7.5, as a standard full-time contract equates to 37.5 hours per week (7.5 hours per day). This provides a consistent way to compare time lost across different working patterns.

How many hours per year is a full-time, front-line paramedic contract?

37.5 hours per week, as per Agenda for Change. This means that the standard yearly hours are 1950 (37.5 weekly hours x 52 weeks).



Can you please ensure that your estimation of cost is based on the average salary multiplied by the number of lost hours?

The estimated cost of absence is calculated using each employee's salary, full-time equivalent (FTE), and number of absence days. This provides a salary-based cost, to which an employer cost factor (covering on-costs such as pension and National Insurance) is added. Both figures are then adjusted to reflect any Occupational Sick Pay (OSP) or Occupational Maternity Pay (OMP) entitlements, which may reduce the cost if the employee was not on full pay. The total estimated cost is the sum of the adjusted salary-based and employer costs. This is the standard calculation used to estimate absence costs in the ESR system.

Next steps

We publish a variety of information which may assist future enquiries relating to our service on our website – www.secamb.nhs.uk.

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](http://www.ico.org.uk/foicomplaints) (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**



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