



7<sup>th</sup> January 2025

Internal Ref: 251012

Email:

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

Tel: 0300 123 0999  
[www.secamb.nhs.uk](http://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.

Please accept the Trust's apologies for the delay and inconvenience you have experienced regarding your FOIA request.

### **FOI Request**

You asked us:

**Please provide the information below in a machine-readable format (CSV or Excel, where applicable).**

- **Where you hold only headcount or FTE, please say which you are providing.**
- **For “control room” please include staff responsible for call handling, dispatch, and any public facing contact-centre functions (please name the unit if locally branded).**
- **If any part of this request would exceed the appropriate limit under s.12 FOIA 2000, please provide as much as possible within the limit, indicate which parts would exceed the limit, and, pursuant to s.16 FOIA, please advise how the scope might be reasonably refined.**
- **Where estimates are used, please make this clear.**
- **If information is already published, please rely on s.21 FOIA and provide the direct link(s).**
- **Where applying any exemption, please identify the section relied upon and explain why it applies.**

#### **1. Summary Information:**

- a. **Name of organisation.**

South East Coast Ambulance NHS Foundation Trust (SECAMB)

- b. **Size of geographical area of responsibility.**

SECAMB covers a diverse geographical area of approximately 3,600 square miles (9,300 square kilometres).



- The region served includes the counties of:
- Kent (including Medway)
  - Surrey
  - East Sussex (including Brighton and Hove)
  - West Sussex
  - North East Hampshire (around areas such as Aldershot, Farnborough, Fleet, and Yateley).

**c. Approximate population within that area.**

SECamb serves an approximate population of 4.9 million people across Kent, Surrey, Sussex, and North East Hampshire.

**d. Current total personnel in organisation (headcount and/or FTE; please specify).**

5136 excluding bank staff.

**Current total personnel by role within department responsible for control-room function (headcount and/or FTE; please specify).**

1138

**e. Number of separate control room locations: Please include function(s) at each (e.g. telephony, dispatch, public-facing, back-office, training, etc.)**

2 control room locations - Crawley and Medway

**All functions at both locations, excluding public—facing.**

**f. Annual personnel budget for entire organisation. (\*)**

£270,898,050

**g. Current annual personnel budget for department operating control rooms. (\*)**

£48,826,948

(\*) *Current financial year.*



The following sections relate only to the department responsible for the control room function.

## 2. Recruitment Process

### a. Brief outline of current recruitment process for control-room personnel.

All roles are recruited via TRAC (Recruitment System) and advertised via NHS Jobs and our SECAMB website. Candidates apply via TRAC providing career history and experience.

Candidates are shortlisted via the Hiring Manager against the Person Specification contained within the Job Description.

Candidates interview (standard questions).

Both successful and unsuccessful candidates notified.

Successful candidates undergo an onboarding process.

### b. Brief outline of use of recruitment agencies (past or present), including:

We do not use recruitment agencies for control room jobs. Were we too, or had we in the past, all candidates would still have to through our internal recruitment processes regardless of the processes used by agencies.

- i. **Sourcing and matching candidates**
  - ii. **Application and screening**
  - iii. **Interviewing**
  - iv. **Use of temporary/agency workers alongside permanent recruitment**
  - v. **Agency post-recruitment provided**
  - vi. **Reasons for discontinuing agency use (if applicable)**
- c. **Brief outline of current interview process, including details of:**
- i. **Panel, group, telephone, or online interviews**

SECAMB uses a standard set of interview questions for Healthcare Advisors and Emergency Medical Advisor (competency based interview)

### ii. Assessment centre techniques (individual/group exercises)

No assessment centre or group exercises are used at this level.

### d. Brief outline of any additional recruitment methods used (past or present):

- i. **Psychometric testing**
- ii. **Thomas (Thomas International) Testing**



- iii. **Candidate presentations**  
Typically reserved for management roles
- iv. **Role play**  
Not seen as an effective recruitment method
- v. **Table-top exercises**  
Typically reserved for management roles

e. **Brief outline of average time-to-hire (calendar days from application to start date).**<sup>(\*)</sup>

This varies from role to role and includes notice periods for successful candidates. Control Room recruitment averages (91days).

f. **Brief outline of numbers of applicants vs. successful hires for each role (per year, if available) .**<sup>(\*)</sup>

Limited information, because TRAC only holds applicant data for 12 months. The figures below include 999 and 111 control rooms across Crawley and Medway for all roles

Applicants from 1/12/24-18/12/25 received	Applicants recruited
10,384	330

g. **Brief outline of minimum/mandatory qualifications or certifications (and whether required pre-employment or obtained during probation).**

This changes role to role. Candidates must meet essential criteria in order to be shortlisted. Desirable criteria can be learned on the job.

***(\*) Most recent 12-months' data (or the closest period held), and (if readily available) the two previous 12-month periods.***

**3. Training Process**

**a. Brief outline of current structure and typical duration of initial training for each area. Please indicate whether duties are trained as separate roles or combined:**

- i. **Call handling**  
Initial training is 3 weeks of classroom based training.  
Followed by 121 mentoring



- ii. **Dispatch**  
7 days of classroom based training. Followed by 121 training.
- iii. **Public-facing roles**  
Not applicable
- iv. **Other/back office roles**  
Dependant on role and skill set required to complete role. On job training and or external/internal courses. All new staff have a corporate induction, In EOC it is completed by the course tutors, who have been trained to deliver it.

**b. Brief outline of pass and fail rates for initial training programmes (percentages or counts).**

Call Handling 65% pass mark for initial course. Dispatch 95% pass mark for initial course. Clinical 90% pass mark for initial course. These numbers include people who leave the initial training course either by not passing or deciding to leave before completion.

**c. Probation period, including length, process for extension, process use for terminating during probation).**

Probation is 26 weeks. There is usually a minimum of two review meetings during the Probation period. At the final probation meeting there are three possible outcomes: a) Probation ended and passed, b) Extended Probation with actions, c) Escalate to a Hearing. If there is a Hearing there three possible outcomes: a) Referral back to Second Probation Review meeting-extension of Probation, b) adjourn if the chair needs extra information , c) Dismissal.

**d. Brief outline of subsequent ongoing CPD and/or refresher requirements (frequency and format; include any mandated hours).**

All staff have a minimum of 3 days key skills yearly. NHS Pathways trained staff have 4 NHS Pathways updates a year, which must be completed.

*(\*) Most recent 12-months' data (or the closest period held), and (if readily available) the two previous 12-month periods*

**4. Retention and Turnover**

- a. Average retention rates for Control Room personnel

**111 Leavers**

Month	Number of Leavers
November 2024	Less than 5
December 2024	7



January 2025	Less than 5
February 2025	Less than 5
March 2025	7
April 2025	8
May 2025	Less than 5
June 2025	6
July 2025	6
August 2025	Less than 5
September 2025	6
October 2025	Less than 5

\* Data blurring at less-than-5: The Trust can confirm that this information exists. However, where an output represents fewer than 5 individuals or incidents in the period requested, we have not provided exact figures. This practice is known as data blurring, which serves to mitigate against the risk of possible re-identification of individual data subjects via data recombination (sometimes referred to as jigsawing). This risk is assessed in accordance with the Information Commissioner’s Office (ICO) *Anonymisation Code of Practice*, in relation to Section 40(2) of the FOIA 2000.

## 999 Leavers

Month	Number of Leavers
November 2024	13
December 2024	16
January 2025	15
February 2025	16
March 2025	24
April 2025	20
May 2025	11
June 2025	15
July 2025	15
August 2025	15
September 2025	22
October 2025	6

**b. Average tenure by role (years/months).**

See attached spreadsheet.

**Turnover percentage (please state formula used, e.g., *leavers in period ÷ average headcount × 100*).<sup>(\*)</sup>**

Please see attached spreadsheet.



- d. **Brief outline of retention strategies in place (e.g., career pathways, formal qualifications, discounts/benefits, hybrid/remote working).**

*(\*) Most recent 12-months' data (or the closest period held), and (if readily available) the two previous 12-month periods.*

Our organisation supports flexible working arrangements for staff across contact centre operations. Hybrid working is available to 111 call centre staff, while our flexible working policy applies to all contact centre staff. To promote engagement and strengthen organisational culture, staff forums and culture forums are offered to call centre staff. In addition, staff networks are in place to foster inclusion and community, including Inspire, Enable, LGBTQIA+, GEN (Gender Equality Network), and the Armed Forces Network.

Career development is supported through TED (Talent, Education & Development), which assists with applications for progression, as well as through step-up opportunities and secondments.

## 5. **Performance Metrics**

- a. **Brief outline of KPIs currently used to measure success in each role (call handling, dispatch, public-facing), including target levels where held).**

### 999 – Call Handling

- Maintain the agreed Aux (currently 30%).
- Achieve an average call handling time of 345 seconds.
- Demonstrate through Audit, high-quality care, and safe outcomes for patients.
- Maintain a PDS compliance rate of 65% or higher.
- Coaches/SEMA's – Contribute positively towards supporting the development of new colleagues in the EOC through mentoring and Diamond Pod duties.

### 999 – Dispatch

- CFR Utilisation: Ensure a minimum of 1 CFR deployment per shift, with a target of 14 deployments per month for full-time staff and part time per shifts worked.
- Clear to Next Status: Aspire to achieve compliance in updating crews to the next status within 60 seconds after completing an incident/clear from previous status.
- Clear to Assign: Aspire to achieve compliance in assigning crews within 75 seconds of clearing from a previous incident/status
- Meal Break Management: Ensure compliance with starting meal breaks within 60 seconds after 5 minutes when crews are on base and ready for break.
- Response Performance Improvement (RPI): Maintain a minimum RPI of 1.08
- C2 Response Time: Aim for a Cat 2 mean response time that meets or exceeds the SECamb average and aspire to achieve 18 minutes.
- Demonstrate through Audit, high-quality care to patients, showing excellent communication, multi-tasking, and prioritisation.



## 6. Wellbeing and Support

### a. Brief outline of availability of mental-health or resilience programmes for control room personnel.

SECamb has a dedicated Wellbeing Hub for all colleagues to access including control room personnel. Colleagues can contact the Wellbeing Hub by email or telephone (telephone line is open 9am-5pm Monday-Friday except Bank Holidays) or refer themselves for Trauma Risk Management (TRiM) or mental health assessment via an online form.

TRiM is a risk assessment tool to measure exposure and reaction to trauma stress. TRiM aims to keep employees functioning after traumatic events, provide information about personal resilience to staff and managers, and identify staff that require specialist help.

Following a mental health assessment with one of our in-house Wellbeing Practitioners, colleagues will receive appropriate signposting to relevant external organisations, or if the assessment reveals work-related trauma (WRT), then colleagues can be referred for short-term, goal-focussed talking therapy (EMDR or TF-CBT) with one of our specialist providers.

In addition, the Wellbeing Hub pages on SECamb's intranet includes articles and resources for many different wellbeing related issues. We also have a Directory of Wellbeing Services which includes details hundreds of organisations providing information and support for many different topics including mental health, finances, bereavement, family and relationships, and much more.

The Ambulance Staff Charity (TASC) provides a 24/7 crisis support line which is available for any SECamb colleague to access.

The Trust has a team of Chaplains who are often on-site and who are available by phone 24/7 for colleagues who need confidential spiritual, emotional or pastoral support, whether they have a faith or not.

In 2023, the Wellbeing Hub was awarded funding from NHS Charities Together and NHS England which was used to fund dedicated Wellbeing Practitioners for our Emergency Operations Centres (999 and 111 call centres) in Medway and Crawley for a fixed time. These colleagues were based on site enabling call centre colleagues to access quick conversations as well as face-to-face assessments. It also enables managers to raise concerns, and they took part in MDTs and offered key skills training sessions "Building Emotional Resilience – Problem Solving Skills" and training sessions for managers "Managing Trauma" which included information about the WRT referral pathway.

Colleagues can join Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) and Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) courses run by in-house trainers from our Mental Health team and we have Wellbeing Advocates based in most locations across the Trust. Wellbeing Advocates can provide signposting whilst a colleague is waiting for an appointment.



## **b. Brief outline of availability of access to occupational health.**

SECamb has a contract with an external Occupational Health Service (OHS). Managers can refer individuals via an online portal for telephone appointments where needed, such as following a period of absence or injury.

In addition, the OHS provides a website with podcasts, videos and articles covering Healthy Body, Healthy Mind, Healthy Life and Healthy Work. It also has a managers' section, supporting them to support their team. They also provide an app which provides a holistic health assessment and personalized content to help users boost their mental and physical well-being. Both can be accessed 24/7.

There are information and links relating to Occupational Health and how to access the OHS available on the SECamb intranet.

## **c. Aggregated data on stress-related absences or sickness (counts and/or rates).<sup>(\*)</sup>**

***(\*) Most recent 12-months' data (or the closest period held), and (if readily available) the two previous 12-month periods***

See attached spreadsheet.

## **7. Exit Data**

### **a. Aggregated reasons for leaving (e.g., resignation, retirement, internal transfer).<sup>(\*)</sup>**

See attached spreadsheet

### **b. Whether exit interviews are conducted and any aggregated insights/themes recorded.<sup>(\*)</sup>**

***(\*) Most recent 12-months' data (or the closest period held), and (if readily available) the two previous 12-month periods***

See spreadsheet in file for this information

## **8. Workforce Composition and Pay Information**

### **a. Current numbers in each role, including all grades/ranks/bands from Head of Department to operational staff (headcount/FTE; please specify).**

Please see attached spreadsheet

### **b. Ratio of full-time vs part-time staff.**

Please see attached spreadsheet.

### **c. Proportion working under formal flexible-working arrangements.**

SECamb do not record this information on our databases so unable to answer this question.



d. **Salary bands applicable to these roles.**  
**Any shift pay, allowances, or other pay enhancements.**  
Please see attached spreadsheet.

## 9. Demographics

a. **Details of applicant demographic by age, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, disability. (\*)**  
Please see attached spreadsheet

b. **Details of departmental demographic by age, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, disability. (\*)**

ESR is showing only 139 applicants for the entire Trust on the Recruitment monitoring dashboard, for all vacancies in the last 12 months.

*(\*) Most recent 12-months' data (or the closest period held), and (if readily available) the two previous 12-month periods.*

The following may not constitute recorded information and may therefore fall outside FOIA. If possible, any narrative that can be shared would be appreciated.

## 10. Learning and Future Plans

a. **Examples of practices applied within recruitment or training that you consider:**

3 **Good practice.**

Inclusive, values-based recruitment. Focus on internal recruitment and career progression. Improving candidate experience through clear communication

**ii. Approaches that led to reflection, adaptation, learning or improvement.**

Bias awareness training for all recruiting managers.

b. **Brief details of any planned changes to recruitment or training processes in next 12–24 months**

Collaborative recruitment with other Ambulance Trusts. A joint programme of working looking at how we focus on national recruitment.

The Trust confirms it holds the information you have requested.

Please see attached documents.

### 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](mailto: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](https://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](https://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