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3rd June 2026
Internal Reference: 260514
Email:

Dear ,

Thank you for your request for information, which we received on **14/05/2026**.
We have considered your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.
Please ensure you quote the Internal Reference number above in any future correspondence.

Your Request

This is a request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (and the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 where applicable). This request is to assist public understanding of inter agency search & rescue coordination and public safety. Please provide the following information in electronic format.

1. Policy documents

Please provide any current EOC/control room SOPs, call handling guidance, checklists or dispatch procedures that cover 999 incidents at littoral/coastal locations (including beaches, foreshore, cliffs, tidal rivers/estuaries, harbours, marinas and piers). In addition, please provide any documents that mention notifying, tasking, requesting or deploying HM Coastguard resources (including Coastguard Rescue Teams and HM Coastguard helicopters).

The Trust considers the part of question 1 seeking current EOC/control room SOPs, call handling guidance, checklists and dispatch procedures relating to littoral or coastal incidents, including references to notifying, tasking, requesting or deploying HM Coastguard resources, to be exempt under section 21 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, as that information is already reasonably accessible to you by other means, namely via the Trust's published EOC Call Handling Procedures available on the [Trust website](#).

Section 21 provides an absolute exemption where requested information is already reasonably accessible to the applicant. In this case, the relevant procedures are set out within the Trust's published EOC Call Handling Procedures and the Trust is therefore not required to reproduce those documents again within this response. In addition to that publicly available material, the Trust has identified further guidance documents relevant to your request, which are not otherwise publicly available and are therefore attached to this response.

If you have difficulty locating the published EOC Call Handling Procedures, or identifying the sections relevant to littoral or coastal incidents and HM Coastguard notification, please contact the Freedom of Information team.

Further guidance documents are attached to this response.

- **Incidence Response Plan – Additional Contingencies Official Sensitive**
- **Water Incidents EOC Action Card**
- **Operation Waypoint Action Card**
- **Operation Lanyard Action Card**

2. Definition / trigger for notifying HM Coastguard

Please provide the exact wording of any policy, guidance or prompt used by your EOC that defines when staff must notify HM Coastguard (for example: 'person in water', 'below high-water mark', 'on cliffs', 'cut off by tide', etc.). Does this policy require HM Coastguard to be notified for incidents matching that wording? Please answer Yes or No.

The Trust considers the part of question 2 seeking the exact wording of the policy, guidance or prompt used by the EOC to determine when HM Coastguard should be notified to be exempt under section 21 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, as that information is already reasonably accessible to you by other means, namely via the Trust's published EOC Call Handling Procedures available on the [Trust website](#).

Section 21 provides an absolute exemption where the requested information is already reasonably accessible to the applicant. In this case, the relevant wording is set out within the Trust's published EOC Call Handling Procedures and the Trust is therefore not required to reproduce that wording again within this response. For the avoidance of doubt, where an incident meets the criteria described in the published procedure, HM Coastguard is required to be notified. The Trust therefore answers the final part of question 2 as Yes.

3. Incident counts by service (aggregated) — 1 January 2023 to present

Please provide an anonymised table (CSV or Excel preferred) that, for your ambulance service as a whole and broken down by year, gives counts of:

- number of 999 incidents recorded by your EOC that occurred at littoral/coastal locations (including beaches, foreshore, cliffs, tidal rivers/estuaries, harbours, marinas and piers);
- of those, number where HM Coastguard was notified at initial tasking; and
- of those, number where HM Coastguard was not notified at initial tasking.

Please refer to the table below:

Year	Organisation Name	Notified At Time Of Tasking	Not Notified At Time Of Tasking	Total
2023	Other	1	2	3
2023	Zone 13 North Kent Coast	5	5	10
2023	Zone 14 East And South Kent Coas	10	9	19
2023	Zone 15 Sussex Coast	29	31	60
2023	Zone 17 Sussex West Of Selsey	0	1	1
2024	Other	3	1	4
2024	Zone 13 North Kent Coast	14	24	38
2024	Zone 14 East And South Kent Coas	15	12	27
2024	Zone 15 Sussex Coast	37	41	78
2024	Zone 17 Sussex West Of Selsey	0	1	1
2025	Other	3	6	9
2025	Zone 12 London To Thames Est	1	0	1
2025	Zone 13 North Kent Coast	25	14	39
2025	Zone 14 East And South Kent Coas	27	15	42
2025	Zone 15 Sussex Coast	49	47	96
2026	Other	1	1	2
2026	Zone 12 London To Thames Est	0	1	1
2026	Zone 13 North Kent Coast	16	10	26
2026	Zone 14 East And South Kent Coas	12	3	15
2026	Zone 15 Sussex Coast	29	18	47
2026	Zone 17 Sussex West Of Selsey	0	1	1

Date Range: 01/01/2023 - 31/05/2026

Count of all attend incidents that have been notified to a HM Coastguard service. Where the time notified was before the first ambulance resource to arrive, this has been counted as “at time of tasking”. We do not hold

information on which incident locations would be categorised as ‘coastal’ or ‘littoral’ and so will not be able to supply this data.

4. No policy explanation (if applicable)

If your service does not hold a formal EOC/control room policy, SOP or written guidance that defines when HM Coastguard must be notified for littoral incidents, please state 'no formal policy' and explain why no such policy exists and what informal or alternative arrangements, if any, are used instead.

Question 4 is not applicable. The Trust does hold formal written guidance relevant to when HM Coastguard should be notified in relation to littoral or coastal incidents. As set out in response to questions 1 and 2, the relevant procedures are contained within the Trust’s published EOC Call Handling Procedures, with additional supporting guidance documents attached to this response.

Next steps

Some information held by the Trust is routinely published on our [website](#) and may be of assistance.

If you are dissatisfied with the Trust’s response to your request, you have the right to ask for an internal review.

Requests for an internal review should be submitted within **40 working days** of the date of this response and should be sent to:

Richard Banks, Head of Corporate Governance at FOI@secamb.nhs.uk

The internal review will be conducted by an individual who was not directly involved in handling your original request, ordinarily the Trust’s Data Protection Officer. We aim to complete internal reviews within **20 working days** of receipt.

If you remain dissatisfied following the outcome of the internal review, you may complain to the Information Commissioner’s Office (ICO). The ICO generally expects complaints to be raised promptly following the completion of an internal review.

The easiest way to raise a complaint is via the ICO’s website:

www.ico.org.uk/foicomplaints

Alternatively, you may write to:
Information Commissioner’s Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
SK9 5AF

Yours sincerely,

Corporate Governance Team

South East Coast Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust