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10th August 2026
Internal Reference: 260526
Email:

Dear ,

Thank you for your request for information, which we received on **20/05/2026**.
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.

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

Your Request and our Formal Response

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, I would like to request the following information for the calendar years 2022, 2023, 2024 and 2025 to date.

1. The number of occasions where ambulance shifts operated below planned staffing levels.

2022*	2023	2024	2025
323 Days	195 Days	106 Days	214 Days

*2022 resourcing levels were impacted due to continued sickness absence through COVID. The Trust has since recovered but continues to set and strive for ambitious resourcing targets to deliver the best care possible for our patients.



2. Total overtime expenditure relating to frontline ambulance operations.

2022	2023	2024	2025
£8,507,612	£6,968,077	£6,372,891	£4,856,936

3. Total expenditure on agency staff or private ambulance providers.

Private Providers:

2022	2023	2024	2025
£6,733,905	£6,150,842	£2,666,097	£0

Agency Staff:

2022	2023	2024	2025
£4,724,385	£2,800,822	£2,070,791	£2,886,652

4. The number of occasions where external ambulance providers were used due to staffing pressures.

Private Providers were used daily until the 1st July 2024, SECAmb have not sourced any private provision post this date.

5. Any recorded incidents where staffing shortages affected:

- * ambulance availability,
- * response capability,
- * call handling performance,
- * or operational resilience.

The Trust considers that compliance with question 5 would exceed the appropriate cost limit under section 12(1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. This part of the request seeks any recorded incidents where staffing shortages affected ambulance availability, response capability, call handling performance or operational resilience across the calendar years 2022, 2023, 2024 and 2025 to date.

The information is not held centrally in a single dataset or report in the form requested. To identify whether relevant information is held, the Trust would need to



conduct searches across multiple operational, workforce, incident reporting and resilience records. Each potentially relevant record would then require manual review to determine whether staffing shortages were recorded as a cause or contributory factor, and whether the impact related specifically to one or more of the categories listed in your request.

Given the breadth of the wording, the number of operational areas covered and the four-year timeframe, the Trust estimates that locating, retrieving and extracting the information relevant to this part of the request would exceed the 18-hour appropriate limit. The Trust is therefore refusing question 5 under section 12(1) of the Act.

In accordance with section 16 of the Act, the Trust has considered what advice and assistance it can provide. You may wish to refine this part of your request by narrowing the timeframe, limiting the request to one specific operational area, or asking for one defined category of information. For example, you may wish to request recorded incidents for one calendar year only, or limit the scope to incidents relating specifically to call handling performance or operational resilience.

If you submit a refined request, the Trust will consider it as a new request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

6. Any internal reports, risk assessments or briefing documents discussing staffing pressures affecting:

- * emergency response times,
- * delayed ambulance availability,
- * staff wellbeing,
- * hospital handover delays,
- * or patient safety concerns.

The Trust considers that compliance with question 6 would exceed the appropriate cost limit under section 12(1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. The request asks for any internal reports, risk assessments or briefing documents discussing staffing pressures across several broad themes, including emergency response times, delayed ambulance availability, staff wellbeing, hospital handover delays and patient safety concerns, for the period 2022 to 2025 to date.

The information is not held centrally in a single report or dataset in the format requested. To respond, the Trust would need to search across multiple directorates, systems and document repositories, including operational, workforce, risk, quality and patient safety records. Each potentially relevant document would then require manual review to determine whether it discusses staffing pressures in the specific context requested and to extract any relevant information.

Given the breadth of the wording, the number of subject areas covered and the four-year timeframe, the Trust estimates that locating, retrieving and extracting the





information relevant to question 6 alone would exceed the 18-hour appropriate limit. The Trust is therefore refusing this part of the request under section 12(1) of the Act. In accordance with section 16 of the Act, the Trust has considered what advice and assistance it can provide. You may wish to refine this part of your request by limiting it to a shorter timeframe, one specific subject area, or one specific document type. For example, you may wish to request risk assessments only for one calendar year, or reports relating to one defined issue such as hospital handover delays or staff wellbeing.

If you submit a refined request, the Trust will consider it as a new request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

7. Any workforce or operational reports discussing sustained pressure on:

- * paramedic staffing,
- * emergency operations centres,
- * or frontline ambulance crews.

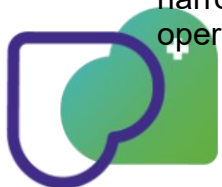
The Trust holds information relevant to parts of your request. However, we are unable to provide the information in the form requested because to do so would exceed the appropriate cost limit under section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Section 12 allows a public authority to refuse a request where the cost of complying would exceed the appropriate limit, which is currently £450 for NHS bodies. This equates to 18 hours of staff time, calculated at £25 per hour. In assessing this request, the Trust is permitted to take into account the time required to determine whether the information is held, locate the information, retrieve it, and extract the relevant information.

Your request covers multiple categories of workforce, operational, financial, incident, risk and briefing information across four calendar years and to date in 2025. The information is not held centrally in a single report or dataset in the format requested. Responding would require searches across several business areas and systems, followed by manual review and extraction to identify which records fall within the scope of each question. This is particularly the case for questions 5 to 7, which seek recorded incidents, internal reports, risk assessments, briefing documents, and workforce or operational reports discussing a range of staffing pressures and operational impacts.

On that basis, the Trust estimates that compliance with the request would exceed the 18-hour appropriate limit. The Trust is therefore refusing the request under section 12(1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

In accordance with section 16 of the Act, the Trust has considered what advice and assistance it can provide to help you refine your request. You may wish to submit a narrower request by reducing the timeframe, limiting the request to one specific operational area, or focusing on a smaller number of questions. For example, you





may wish to request information for one calendar year only, or ask for a specific recorded dataset such as overtime expenditure or agency/private ambulance provider expenditure, if held centrally.

If you submit a refined request, the Trust will consider it as a new request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

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

