



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

Tel: 0300 123 0999
www.secamb.nhs.uk

24th June 2026
Internal Reference: 260529
Email:

Dear ,

Thank you for your request for information, which we received on **22/05/2026**.
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, I would like to request clarification regarding the use, governance, and management of SECAMB Charity funds, particularly in relation to Community First Responders (CFRs) and locally raised/ring-fenced funds.

Specifically, I would be grateful if you could provide information on the following:

1. What categories of expenditure are funded through SECAMB Charity funds?

The charity's annual accounts are published through the Charity Commission and provide information on the charity's income and expenditure.

The Trust does not currently publish a separate detailed breakdown of income and expenditure beyond its annual accounts and information available through the charity website and communications channels.

The charity's annual accounts provide expenditure information using the financial reporting categories adopted for statutory reporting. Where the

specific proportions requested are not held in the format requested, the Trust does not hold recorded information showing this breakdown.

SECAMB Charity expenditure is reported within the charity's annual accounts.

For the year ended 31 March 2025 expenditure was reported as:

Patients' welfare and amenities: £165k
Staff welfare and amenities: £68k
Management and administration costs: £8k
Governance costs: £4k

As the charity continues to develop, there is an intention to provide greater visibility of the impact delivered through charitable funding and supporter contributions. The categories and allocations shown reflect the charity's current approach and may evolve over time to provide a more detailed breakdown of the wide range of charitable activities and areas of support already delivered. The charity fund above and beyond what core NHS budgets are allocated to provide.

2. What proportion of charity funds is allocated towards:

- Frontline equipment - **£0k**
- Community projects - **£0k**
- Volunteer support - **£165k***
- Public engagement and education - **£0k**
- Salaries, staffing, or administrative costs - **£80k****

The above figures have been taken from the 2024/25 Charitable Accounts

*Part of the £165k for volunteer support provided staff as part of the restricted funds, see below.

**Of the £80k for staffing £68k was for the delivery of wellbeing services for the benefit of Trust staff, the remainder was for administrative costs as stated above.

There is no set allocation for charitable funds, as it is dependent on the requests received and donor restrictions.

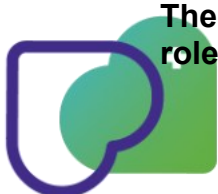
This reflects the current allocation of charitable funds, as clinical equipment and similar operational items are primarily funded through NHS Trust budgets.

3. Are any SECAMB staff salaries, part-salaries, secondments, or funded roles paid wholly or partly through SECAMB Charity funds? If so, please provide:

- The role titles
- Whether funding is full or partial
- The department/function of those roles

SECAMB Charity does not currently fund any permanent Trust posts, part-salaries or secondments from its general charitable funds.

The charity currently supports two whole time equivalent fixed-term project roles funded through restricted funding received for a specific charitable



purpose. These roles sit within the Community Resilience function and are fully funded through that restricted funding.

Any expenditure relating to staffing is subject to the charity's governance and approval processes and must comply with the purpose of the relevant fund.

4. Is there a published breakdown of SECAMB Charity income and expenditure available to volunteers or the public beyond standard Charity Commission reporting?

No, the Trust does not publish any other breakdown beyond the standard Charity Commission reporting

5. In relation to locally raised and ring-fenced CFR funds:
- What is the current process for requesting approval to use those funds?
 - What restrictions now apply to the spending of locally raised funds?
 - Who authorises expenditure requests?
 - What procurement or approved supplier rules apply?
 - Can locally ring-fenced funds still be used directly for local CFR equipment, community defibrillators, training resources, or local initiatives?
 - What is the process and expected timescale for obtaining approval to spend these funds?

Please refer to answer to refer to answers to question 11.

6. Please provide details of the previous arrangements and policies regarding CFR fundraising, local charity accounts, and locally managed/ring-fenced funds prior to the recent changes.

Charitable Funds Procedure v2 October 2023 remains the current procedure governing charitable funds and has not been withdrawn, replaced or superseded.

The charity has introduced interim delegated approval arrangements for expenditure requests. These arrangements were approved by the Charitable Funds Committee in August 2025 pending implementation of updated governance documentation.

Under these interim arrangements:

- Requests up to £1,000 may be approved by the Head of Charity.
- Requests between £1,000 and £5,000 may be approved by the Head of Charity and Director of Communications and Engagement.
- Requests between £5,000 and £25,000 require approval from the Director of Finance and Director of Communications and Engagement.
- Requests above £25,000 require approval by the Charitable Funds Committee.
- Requests above £100,000 require Trust Board approval.



Other than the introduction of these interim delegated approval arrangements, the Charitable Funds Procedure remains unchanged.

7. Please provide:

- The dates when the relevant charity and fundraising policies were reviewed or updated
- Copies of previous and current versions of those policies
- Details of any consultation or communication provided to CFR teams regarding these changes

Please see response above which includes the details to the requested information.

8. In relation to the document titled “Charitable Funds Procedure v2 Oct 2023”:

- Please confirm whether this remains the current active policy governing charitable funds and CFR fundraising arrangements.
- If it has been replaced, withdrawn, or superseded, please provide the replacement policy and the date the change occurred.

Charitable Funds Procedure v2 October 2023 remains current and has not been withdrawn, replaced or superseded.

9. The “Charitable Funds Procedure v2 Oct 2023” document appears to state that:

- CFRs may fundraise under the umbrella of the SECAMB Charity,
- CFRs are permitted to purchase equipment from their charitable fund accounts,
- and charitable funds have historically contributed towards staff welfare and wellbeing support.

Please clarify:

- Which parts of this policy remain current,
- Which parts have been amended or superseded,
- When these changes were approved,
- And where the updated guidance can be accessed.

Please see question 7 response which provides clarification to the requested information above.

10. The appendix within the same document also appears to show an example request for charitable funds to support a Band 6 Community Resilience Lead role for a one-year period.

Please clarify:



- Whether charitable funds are currently being used to fund staff posts or salaries,
- How many posts are currently funded wholly or partly through charitable funds,
- And the governance and approval process used for this expenditure.

See above questions 1-3.

11. The “Charitable Funds Procedure v2 Oct 2023” document also appears to set out the process by which CFR teams could request and spend funds held within their charitable accounts, including locally raised and ring-fenced funds.

Please clarify:

- Whether this process is still current,
- Whether CFR teams are still permitted to access and spend locally ring-fenced funds under the same arrangements,
- And what transitional arrangements apply if the policy or approval process has now changed.

Charitable Funds Procedure v2 October 2023 remains the current procedure governing charitable funds and CFR fundraising arrangements.

Funds already raised for a specific CFR team, locality or purpose continue to be managed in accordance with the purpose for which they were raised and any known donor restrictions.

Existing locally ring-fenced CFR funds remain available to support expenditure consistent with the purpose for which they were raised, subject to the charity's governance and approval processes.

Requests for expenditure are submitted using the charitable funds application form. Applications should identify the relevant charitable fund, the proposed expenditure and the intended charitable benefit.

Under the current interim arrangements, applications are submitted to the charity inbox and considered through the interim delegated approval arrangements.

Community First Responders may request expenditure from funds held within the Charitable Fund for equipment and other charitable purposes relating to services provided by SECAMB.

Subject to appropriate approval, locally ring-fenced funds already raised may continue to be used for local CFR equipment, community defibrillators, training resources and other charitable initiatives consistent with the known purpose for which the funds were raised.



The Community First Responder Policy states that equipment purchased from charitable funds, including defibrillators, must be in line with Trust governance requirements and recommendations.

Purchases funded through charitable funds are subject to the charity's governance and financial control arrangements.

The Charitable Funds Procedure also contains a delegated approval provision for community response equipment invoices not exceeding £4,000. Historic records indicate this provision was introduced in relation to a fund established through donations and fundraising to support volunteer community responder schemes across Sussex, allowing routine expenditure on equipment and clothing without requiring smaller requests to be referred through the charitable funds sub-committee approval process that operated at that time.

Current expenditure approvals are managed through the interim delegated approval arrangements described above.

Donations

Community First Responders may fundraise under the umbrella of SECAMB Charity. Where the Trust's charitable registration is used, all monies donated must be deposited into the Charitable Funds in accordance with the Community First Responder Policy.

Timescales

Timescales for approval vary depending on the value and complexity of the request. Requests falling within delegated approval limits can generally be considered more quickly than requests requiring referral to the Charitable Funds Committee or Trust Board.

Existing ring-fenced funds and donor intention

Existing restricted CFR funds already held within SECAMB Charity continue to be held and managed within the relevant charitable fund in accordance with the purpose for which they were raised and any applicable donor restrictions.

Requests for expenditure are considered against the purpose of the fund, any known restrictions attached to the donation or fund, and the charity's governance and approval processes before funds are released.

The Trust's approved Community Resilience and Volunteer Strategy sets out an intention to move towards a more consistent model for Volunteer and Community Resilience. As part of this approach, CFR schemes will be encouraged to bring forward proposals for expenditure from existing restricted fund balances so that those funds can be applied to the charitable purposes for which they were raised.



Any future proposal relating to the redesignation, consolidation or transfer of restricted charitable funds would be subject to appropriate charity governance processes, consideration of donor intention and compliance with charity law.

12. If funds were raised and donated locally under the previous charitable fund arrangements and guidance, what happens to those funds if the terms, governance, or permitted use have subsequently changed?

Please clarify:

- Whether existing locally ring-fenced CFR funds remain protected for their originally intended local purpose,
- Whether those funds can now be redirected, pooled, or absorbed into wider SECAMB Charity funds,
- And what rights or input local CFR teams retain regarding the use of money raised specifically for their communities.

Please see previous question.

13. I have also been unable to locate the “Charitable Funds Procedure v2 Oct 2023” document through normal internal or public searches.
Please confirm:

- Whether this document has been withdrawn, replaced, or superseded,
- The date this occurred,
- And where the current version of the policy and guidance can now be accessed.

Charitable Funds Procedure v2 October 2023 remains current and has not been withdrawn, replaced or superseded.

Copies of the current Charitable Funds Procedure and Community First Responder Policy can be provided, but is not publicly available.

14. Where funds were historically raised locally under the previous charitable fund arrangements and guidance, and donors contributed on the understanding that those funds would directly support their local CFR team or community, please clarify:

- Whether local CFR teams are permitted to transfer previously ring-fenced locally raised funds into independently managed team accounts for continued use in line with the original donor intentions.
- If this is not permitted, please explain the legal, governance, or policy basis for preventing such transfers.
- How SECAMB Charity ensures that funds donated under previous arrangements continue to be used in accordance with the expectations and intentions under which those donations were originally made.



- Whether any consultation was undertaken with CFR teams or donors before any changes were made to the governance or permitted use of these locally raised funds.

The Charitable Funds Procedure recognises that some CFR groups have historically established independent charities in their own right. Such organisations are separate legal entities with responsibility for their own governance, financial management and compliance with charity law.

This response relates to funds held within SECAMB Charity and managed by the Corporate Trustee.

Where fundraising is undertaken under the umbrella of SECAMB Charity, all monies donated must be deposited into the Charitable Fund.

Charitable funds held within SECAMB Charity are managed through the charity's governance and financial control arrangements. Transferring charitable funds into independently managed external accounts would remove those funds from the charity's governance, financial control and oversight arrangements.

Accordingly, charitable funds raised and held under the umbrella of SECAMB Charity remain within the Charitable Fund and are applied through the charity's governance and approval processes rather than being held in independently managed team, volunteer, staff or community group accounts.

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



Saving Lives,
Serving Our Communities

Chair: Michael Whitehouse Interim CEO: Jen Allan