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6<sup>th</sup> March 2015

Email:

Dear

I am writing in response to your enquiry under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) reference FOI/15/02/21.

You requested the following information:

**1. How many shifts your ambulance service filled using agency staff in 2014.**

**Following a couple of requests for clarification on the request above:**

- \* Please include only shifts for/spend on front line staff**
- \* Please include private providers who provide their own vehicles/consumables etc (and do be clear if this is included in the highest shift cost).**

We do not use agency staff to assist with front line staffing. However we do use private ambulance providers to support our front line staff. Please see the responses to Q5 and Q6 with regard to expenditure on these providers.

We are continuing to look at ways in which we can reduce our reliance on the use of private ambulance services and always prioritise using our own staff whenever possible. However, along with all ambulance services nationally, South East Coast Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust (SECAMB) does use private ambulance providers when faced with high levels of demand, when experiencing high call volume or during periods of bad weather.

We have robust governance arrangements in place for the procurement of private ambulance services. While working on our behalf any private provider will be subject to a continuous monitoring and assessment process, to ensure they are providing a high level of service.

**2. How many shifts your ambulance service filled using agency staff in 2013.**

**3. The highest individual shift cost in 2014, the position filled, length of the shift and the date of the shift.**

#### **4. The highest individual shift cost in 2013, the position filled, the length of the shift and the date of the shift.**

I have to advise that I am unable to provide any further information on the basis of the exemption contained within s43 (2) of the FOI Act ( Commercial Interests). The Trust accepts that there is a public interest in how public money is spent; however there is also a need to withhold information that would prejudice the commercial interest of the Trust and/ or third parties. In assessing the public interest, the Trust takes the view that this would be the case in this instance. The Trust considers that this information, in conjunction with other information that might already or will be in the public domain, could lead to the commercial interests of the Trust together with the companies we use being adversely affected.

#### **5. The total spend on agency staff in 2014.**

The total spend on agency staff trust wide in 2013/2014 was £2,666,000.00. This figure represents the entire Trust agency costs for administration and support roles within all departments including Patient Transport Services, Emergency Operations Centres and NHS 111.

The total spend on private ambulance providers for A & E responses during 2013/2014 was £10,542,000.00 against a total operating expenditure of £186,776,000. This figure does not just represent staff costs; it also covers the use of the vehicles, equipment and other related costs.

#### **6. The total spend on agency staff in 2013.**

The total spend on agency staff trust wide in 2012/2013 was £1,746,000.00. This figure represents the entire Trust agency costs for administration and support roles within all departments including Patient Transport Services, Emergency Operations Centres and NHS 111.

The total spend on private ambulance providers for A & E responses during 2012/2013 was £6,846,422 against a total operating expenditure of £168,785,000. This figure does not just represent staff costs; it also covers the use of the vehicles, equipment and other related costs.

I hope you find this information helpful.

If, for whatever reason you are unhappy with our response, you are entitled to pursue any dissatisfaction through South East Coast Ambulance NHS Foundation Trust's (SECAMB) Internal Review Procedure at:

South East Coast Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust  
40-42 Friars Walk  
Lewes  
East Sussex  
BN7 2XW  
Email: [complaints@secamb.nhs.uk](mailto:complaints@secamb.nhs.uk)

Should you remain unhappy with the outcome of any such internal review , you may request a decision from the Information Commissioner at:

The Information Commissioner's Office

Wycliffe House  
Water Lane  
Wilmslow  
Cheshire  
SK9 5AF

If I can be of further assistance to you, please do not hesitate to contact me, quoting the above reference number.

Yours sincerely

Freedom of Information Coordinator  
South East Coast Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust