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Lewes
East Sussex
BN7 2XW

Tel: 0300 123 0999
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4th March 2015

Email:

Dear

I am writing in response to your enquiry under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) reference FOI/15/02/12.

You requested the following information:

I would like to know the number of hoax/ prank 999 emergency calls South East Coast Ambulance Service had to deal with and the duration of these calls.

I would like this information for the years 2012, 2013 and 2014 for the whole of East Sussex and also west Kent and if possible broken down into the boroughs of Rother, Wealden, Tunbridge Wells, Tonbridge and Malling, Sevenoaks and Maidstone.

The vast majority of calls are genuine or made in good faith and the Trust treats all calls seriously. However, on occasions we receive a call and dispatch an ambulance where there is either nobody at the scene or the person at the address denies making the call. For example a member of the public might make a call in the genuine belief that someone needs our assistance but the potential patient might leave the scene before an ambulance arrives. Therefore the category used for recording such calls is 'Abandoned/ Hoax' call.

Malicious hoax calls are irresponsible and dangerous as they can put lives at risk by diverting resources from genuine emergencies.

Please see the attached spreadsheets which show the number of calls classified as abandoned or hoax for the area requested and the number of calls where a response vehicle was sent and arrived on scene only to find no patient at the scene of the incident. This information relates to the calendar years of 2012, 2013 and 2014. This table also shows the total number of calls received and emergency responses made in each of the requested areas to put these figures into context.

I would also like to know what these calls were for (if known).

I would also like to know if ambulances were sent out and how long they were sent out for to attend to these calls.

I must advise that I am unable to provide any further details of these responses on the grounds of the exemption within s12 of the FOIA. To retrieve the requested information would mean manually scrutinizing the record of each of the responses made to identify the nature and duration of the call. This would exceed the appropriate limit of 18 hours as set down in the guidance on the application of the Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees).

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

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