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10th March 2015

Email:

Dear

I am writing in response to your enquiry under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) reference FOI/15/02/16.

In reply to our previous letter dated 29th October 2014 you have raised the following questions based on our Make Ready Centre located in Paddock Wood and regulation 97 of the Road Vehicle (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986. 'No motor vehicle shall be used on a road in such manner as to cause any excessive noise which could have been avoided by the exercise of reasonable care on the part of the driver.'

1. How do you ensure that ambulance crews are suitably trained in terms of when and how to use sirens, where 'when' includes duration and particular setting of the siren?

All drivers who respond using sirens and lights have completed the relevant standard response course which is a nationally recognised set of standards and competencies, delivered by a suitably qualified and competent driving instructor.

Ultimately, the responsibility is placed on the suitably trained driver who needs to be able to justify their action in accordance with Regulation 99 of the Road Vehicle (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986. The tone and duration of the siren is again the responsibility of the driver where it is deemed necessary or desirable to do so either to indicate to other road users the urgency of the purposes for which the vehicle is being used, or to warn other road users of the presence of the vehicle on the road.

2. How do you make ambulance crews aware of the above regulation 97?

Regulation 97 Avoidance of Excessive Noise, is more in keeping to the offences detailed under section 59 of the Police Reform Act 2002 and is specific to antisocial driving, i.e. load music, wheel spinning etc. and not the use of a siren as defined under Regulation 99 of the Road Vehicle (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986. To that end they are not made aware of this regulation.

3. As you are apparently responsible for your Trust's adherence to that regulation, how do you monitor and enforce compliance by ambulance crews?

The Driving Policy, Road Traffic Law in regard to exemptions and driver behaviour is monitored via peer review and several electronic driver safety systems and is exception-based reporting. The number of complaints received for the use of sirens is minimal and therefore requires no further monitoring mechanisms or additional training.

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