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7th July 2015

Email:

Dear

I am writing in response to your enquiry under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) reference FOI/15/06/11.

You requested the following information:

**Could you please release the following information to me, under the Freedom of Information Act, in relation to the action of your staff as part of the Driver Training Advisory Group between Trusts.**

**Some of this information does relate to dealings with a commercial organisation, but the request does not request any sensitive data, and if that data would inadvertently be released you are able to redact the sensitive word or phrase.**

**In relation to all these requests, I am requesting:**

- emails (internal and external)**
- notes, memoranda, and documents**
- handwritten notes of your staff**

**The information requested is:**

**1. All information relating to the selection of Future Quals as the provider of driver training course accreditation/awards for NHS Trusts.**

Due to the phased withdrawal of the IHCD awards portfolio, currently administered by Pearson Education UK, interim arrangements are being made within an existing arrangement with an alternative provider, FutureQuals. They have agreed to expand their qualifications portfolio to

include the new driving programme. No formal selection of an Awarding Organisation under contract has been reached, this work is being developed to commence in 2016/17.

The development of training materials and subsequent awards are complex pieces of work and consequently have significant value. The emails generated between interested parties that you request thus contain commercially sensitive information and therefore cannot be provided on the grounds of the exemption contained within s43 (2) Commercial Interests. Emails have primarily been used to circulate draft units in development and the master-control document of the overall education transformation project, this too containing sensitive information. The time required to collate all emails and remove such sensitive information would require significant time, resource and cost and therefore cannot be provided on the grounds of the exemption contained within s12 of the FOI Act. 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).

We are pleased to confirm that documents used to assist in the design of the new driving programme are publicly available. These primarily being the Police Foundation Roadcraft manual, The Official Highway Code and the UK Ambulance Services Emergency Response Driver's Handbook, in addition to the consultation documents and draft Codes of Practice relating to Section 19 Road Safety Act 2006. Other documents, such as interim agreements are commercially sensitive and the exemption under s43 (2) applies.

## **2. The nature of any and all exclusivity arrangements (implicit or explicit) by which Future Qualls are not able to offer this qualification to non-NHS providers.**

Our understanding is that private training providers, can, subject to the relevant quality assurance criteria and legal requirements deliver driver training programmes. Driving programmes that require emergency response exemptions to be applied must be compliant for the purposes laid out in the current Section 87 Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and recently revised under the Deregulation Act 2015 and further more Section 19 Road Safety Act 2006, deliver training.

It is important to note that further changes are expected from the 2012 Section 19 public consultation, which contains provisions around the authorisation required of private training providers to deliver high speed driving programmes in line with the stated High Speed Driver Training competencies.

## **3. The advisory role played by any of your staff in development of the Future Qualls award.**

The Association of Ambulance Chief Executives (AACE) requested that the national Human Resources Director group (HRDs) create an Education Transformation project to ensure training for ambulance services remain fit for purpose. Subsequently, a new programme design has been developed by Driver Training Advisory Group (DTAG) for future driver training. The role of FutureQualls was to advise where necessary on the OFQUAL requirements on producing QCF units fit for purpose to enter the framework under an interim agreement. As you may be aware, DTAG membership represents all of the United Kingdom's statutory ambulance services.

**4. Any agreement or promise of your (or any other) Trust to use Future Quals ambulance driving awards.**

As explained previously, the award has been developed jointly between DTAG and FutureQuals under current agreements and ownership of that intellectual property for the joint work is jointly shared.

**5. Any materials relating to efforts to try and prevent other awarding bodies from running qualifications in this area.**

Ambulance Trusts are quite at liberty to access training programmes and awards from other sources whilst recognising intellectual property ownership needs to be respected.

**6. Any communication with other public bodies, ALMOs, or representative bodies, about the development, awarding, or running of this qualification (including high speed working group, ACPO etc.)**

Throughout the development of the new driving qualification, the design group have referenced the newly devised programme against publicly available materials from Police Foundation Roadcraft, The Official Highway Code and Section 19 Consultation HSDT competencies. For the awarding aspects please refer to points made previously.

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