26th June 2015

Email:

Dear

I am writing in response to your enquiry under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) reference FOI/15/06/03.

You requested the following information:

1. Please provide a copy of the agreed procedure or policy your Trust follows around the conveyance of mental health patients.

Please find attached a copy of the policy titled Conveyance of Patients –s6 Mental Health Act which is in place in Sussex.

2. How many requests to convey mental health patients did your Trust receive for in each of the following financial years: 2010-11, 2011-12, 2012-13, 2013-14 and 2014-15?

Please see the table below which shows information on responses and transports to hospital for the financial years 2012/2013, 2013/2014 and 2014/2015. NHS Pathways triage system was introduced within our Trust during 2011/2012 with each Emergency Operations Centre being added separately therefore full figures are not available for this year. Prior to that a different triage system was used which did not capture mental health issues as a category. The following figures are based on the information provided to the call taker during the 999 call and therefore following triage of the call it was determined that the nature of the problem was mental health issues.

Financial Year	Responses	Transports to hospital
2012/2013	16,251	10,753
2013/2014	16,605	11,303
2014/2015	17,963	11,807

3. For each year, how many of these requests did your Trust refuse?

None

Your service, your call

4. What is the locally agreed target time (or times if for an ambulance response to an a) urgent and b) non-urgent request for conveyance of mental health patients?

There is no locally agreed target specific to mental health patients.

5. What was the average ambulance response time for requests for conveyance of mental health patients at your trust in 2010-11, 2011-12, 2012-13, 2013-14 and 2014-15? Please provide separate average times for a) urgent and) non-urgent requests.

We cannot provide information for 2010/2011 and 2011/2012 as previously stated.

Please see the attached spreadsheet which shows the average response times to patients identified as having mental health issues over the last three financial years broken down into Red 1, Red 2 , Green2 and Green4 responses. These figures do not include requests for emergency responses from Healthcare Professionals.

South East Coast Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust (SECAmb) has a national target to respond to 75% of 'Red' (life-threatening) category incidents within 8 minutes. If the first response is not a resource able to transport and a transport is required, then one able to should arrive within 19 minutes of it being requested. 'Green' (non-life threatening) category incidents comprise those conditions which need to be attended quickly, but which will not deteriorate or suffer by a slightly slower response. There are two local response targets for Green 2 & 4 responses: G2 – with a target of 30minutes and G4 with a target of 60 minutes.
Please note that we do not have differential response time targets as such, for the various geographical areas in SECAmb; our response times will be affected by the geography and frequency of Red category incidents. There has been a change to how calls are triaged in 2014/2015 hence there were more Red 1 responses.

Variations on response times exist throughout the year for a number of reasons and this includes time of the year and how busy we are. Bank Holiday weekends are always extremely busy for the ambulance service and our staff work very hard to ensure they reach patients as quickly as possible.

While response times are important, what is also vital is the treatment patients receive once our clinicians arrive at the scene of an emergency. We are pleased that the government now places a greater emphasis on patient outcomes as well as response times. This is something we had been calling for, for a number of years.

Along with all parts of the NHS, SECAmb has been and continues to be extremely busy. We recognise that there can be variation in our performance in terms of response times throughout the year. While every effort is made to meet our performance targets at all times, variation can exist because of challenging weather conditions or unanticipated increases in demand.

SECAmb staff work extremely hard to meet this increase in demand and the Trust is committed to providing an excellent service to our patients across Kent, Surrey and Sussex.

Your service, your call

I would like to stress that we continually look at ways to ensure that we meet our performance standards even at a local level and will look into cases which have longer than average response times to establish whether more can be done to get to patients quicker.

6. What was the longest ambulance response time to a request for conveyance of mental health patient at your Trust in 2010-11, 2011-12, 2012-13, 2013-14 and 2014-15? Please provide separate longest times for a) urgent and b) non-urgent requests.

We cannot provide information for 2010/2011 and 2011/2012 as previously stated.

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

Your service,
your call