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15th January 2016

Email:

Dear

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

You requested the following information:

The time period I would like is 2014-2015 or nearest available records for first responders (paramedic crew) to a code red 1 & 2 regarding heart attack patients.

Please see the table below which the number of responses made to Red 1 and Red 2 calls. These figures are based on the information obtained from the caller during triage of the 999 call where the problem nature was indicated as cardiac arrest, cardiac/ respiratory arrest, chest pain/ cardiac problems or chest, upper back pain or palpitations. This may not necessarily be the problem when the crew attend the patient.

| Financial Year | Red 1 responses | Red 2 responses |
|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 2014/2015 | 4,787 | 50,219 |

Is it normal policy for a technician and a support crew worker to be the first responder to a code red 1 or code red 2 call?

Yes this is the case as well as a Community First Responder (CFR) also as this maybe the nearest response to start helping a patient but they would always be backed up by the appropriate Paramedic/ Critical Care Paramedic crew.

What proportion of the budget is spent on private ambulances and crew and are they fully trained in administering iv drugs morphine or can read an ECG?

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.

Please see the table below which shows the proportion of the budget spent on private ambulances in 2014/2015.

| | 2014/2015 £000's |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Private Providers | 14,405 |
| Total operating expenditure | 198,475 |
| % allocation | 7% |

Private provider staff operate according to the scope of practice of their qualifications in line with Trust remits. This means that they are able to administer the same medicines as SECAmb staff if they hold the same qualifications and are legally compliant with their licensing.

This is the same in relation to diagnostic and recognition skills related to the qualification held by PAP staff.

How many private ambulances were the first responder to a heart attack patient?

Private Ambulance Providers (PAPs) were the first unit on scene on 186 occasions to a Red 1 call and PAPs were the first unit on scene on 2,386 occasions to a Red 2 call. These figures are based on the information obtained from the caller during triage of the 999 call where the problem nature was indicated as cardiac arrest, cardiac/ respiratory arrest, chest pain/ cardiac problems or chest, upper back pain or palpitations. This may not necessarily be the problem when the crew attend the patient.

Finally if the money spent is disproportionate to the money available to the NHS for training paramedics as opposed to funding private ambulances?

We do not provide opinions under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

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