



40-42 Friars Walk
Lewes
East Sussex
BN7 2XW

Tel: 0300 123 0999
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29th February 2016

Email:

Dear

I am writing in response to your enquiry under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) reference FOI/16/02/12.

You requested the following information:

I am writing under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and I would like access to the following information:

A list of all times private minicab and licensed black taxi firms were called by control centre operatives, paramedics or any employees of your ambulance service to respond to a 999 call in the last 12 months.

Could the response please include the following data fields:

- i) the category of the call**
- ii) response time**
- iii) destination of the cab journey, i.e. A&E department**
- iii) the name of the cab company used in each instance**
- iii) summary details of the original 999 call and any subsequent call to the local A+E department**

South East Coast Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust does not utilise taxis for responding to 999 calls.

However, we do make use of approved taxi companies to convey patients at times of peak demand where there is no medical need for an assessment at scene or ongoing clinical care when a patient is being transported to hospital.

These patients would have received a triage by a trained call handler and if the outcome of this assessment is for the patient to make their own way to a health care facility and for some reason they can't carry out that instruction but are able to travel in a car, the call would be referred to a Clinical Supervisor for assessment. The ambulance service has a duty of care to ensure patients

are able to receive care even if there are social barriers to them getting help. The Clinical Supervisor would discuss with the patient what options are available to get to hospital and as a last resort a taxi would be booked if suitable to avoid an ambulance being used as a purpose of transport only.

The Trust also makes use of taxis where a GP or other health care professional has decided transport to hospital is required but on a non-medical transport only basis. Again in these circumstances very often the same social barriers exist that prevent the GP arranging alternative methods. If the ambulance service wanted to use a taxi it would again be reviewed, by a Clinical Supervisor in the control or agreed with the GP or Health Care Professional.

In the last 12 months 82 journeys have been provided by taxi, and usually occur during periods of escalation or peak demand. This figure needs to be seen in the context of the total number of calls we receive which is approximately 800,000 per year.

We have adhoc arrangements with two local taxi firms who have drivers who have undergone CRB/DBS checking which is a legislated requirement for all taxi and private hire companies. The taxi companies used are Woking Cars and Carline Hire and work is allocated on a geographic basis by general rule.

Please see the table below which shows the number of taxi journeys to hospitals in London, Surrey and Sussex during the period from 1st January 2015 to 31st December 2015.

Destination	Number of taxi journeys
Crawley Hospital	4
East Surrey Hospital	26
Epsom Hospital	3
Frimley Park Hospital	8
Kingston Hospital	3
Princess Royal Hospital	2
Royal Surrey	13
St Georges Hospital	2
St Helier Hospital	1
St Peters Hospital	20
TOTAL	82

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