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28th June 2016

Email:

Dear

I am writing in response to your enquiry under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) reference FOI/16/05/29.

You requested the following information:

**I would like to enquire about frequent or repeat callers. I am assuming the definition of 'frequent caller' to be someone who calls at least 10 times a month (as stated on the London Ambulance Service website). However if you collect data for a definition of the issue that is different in any way, please state that definition and provide the figures requested accordingly.**

**My questions are as follows:**

**1. How many 999 calls did the SECAMB receive from repeat callers in each of years 2013, 2014, 2015?**

The overwhelming majority of Individuals or organisations who access the 999 or 111 systems that the South East Coast Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust (SECAMB) provide do so with legitimate healthcare requirements.

The identification and management of those who access emergency and urgent healthcare at an abnormally high level, could lead to the identification of individuals who are at risk, vulnerable or have an unmet health or social care need.

The activity and workload summaries provided in response to the questions below demonstrate the significant success of the strategies we have employed to manage the complex needs of a relatively small pool of frequent callers.

These strategies include making effective use of the clinical supervisors in the Emergency Operations Centres, skilled paramedics and nurses specialising in the management of a wide range of conditions which do not necessarily require an emergency ambulance response who are able to

assess and plan the care of individuals, providing appropriate referral to the patient's own GP for example.

In addition to the significant contribution by our clinicians in the Emergency Operations Centres, the Trust is actively involved at a national and regional level in ensuring a consistent approach to managing frequent callers and ensuring that the manner in which we support these often vulnerable people meets their individual needs without having an impact on the wider service.

Our approach to providing care to frequent callers involves a whole-system approach and includes GPs, community services and commissioners, which we support with the use of special notes and systems such as IBIS (Intelligence Based Information System), which has been developed and is managed by SECamb.

The Trust uses the following definition of a repeat caller to the Service – “A patient making 3 or more clinically related calls in a single 96 hour period, usually with no history of previously doing so”.

We are unable to respond to this question as this information is not recorded by the Trust.

## **2. What proportion of calls in each of the last three years were from frequent callers? (Feel free to provide the total numbers of callers for each year so I can do the maths myself.)**

The Trust uses the following definition of a Frequent Caller to the Service – “A Frequent Caller is defined by the Ambulance Service Frequent Caller National Network (FreCaNN) as someone aged 18 or over who makes 5 or more emergency calls related to individual episodes of care in a month, or 12 or more emergency calls related to individual episodes of care in 3 months from a private dwelling.

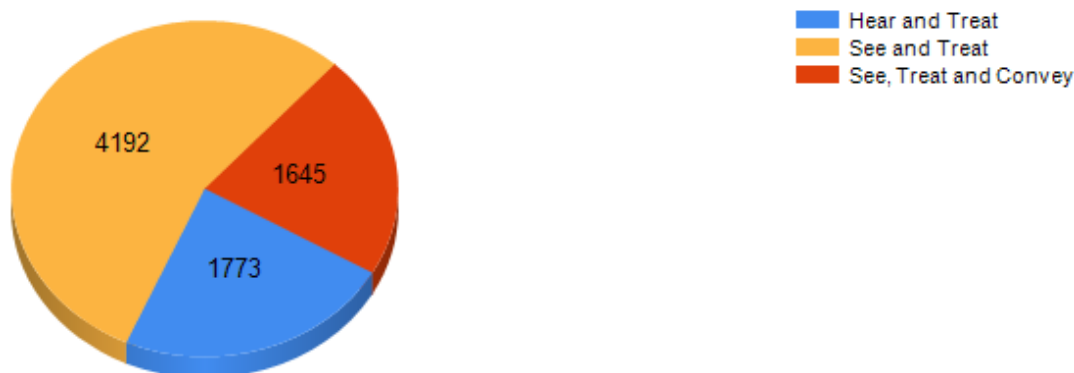
We are currently unable to provide data within the definition of a Frequent Caller for the last 3 years. However we are able to provide a snapshot of the last 3 complete months (March 2016 – May 2016):-

Total Addresses Listed	<b>495</b>
Total 999 Call Volume (3 Month)	<b>213,361</b>
999 Frequent Caller (3 Month Total Calls)	<b>7,605</b>
999 Frequent Caller (As Total Activity)	<b>3.56%</b>

### 3. What proportion of calls from frequent callers received a visit from an ambulance in each of those three years?

We are currently unable to provide data within the definition of a Frequent Caller for the last 3 years. However we are able to provide a snapshot of the last 3 complete months (March 2016 – May 2016):-

	Incidents	Percentage
Hear & Treat	1,773	23.30%
See & Treat	4,192	55.09%
See, Treat & Convey	1,645	21.62%
	7,610	



### 4. If the data is available, what proportion of those in question 3 were found to require medical treatment?

I regret to advise that we cannot provide this information on the grounds of the exemption contained within s.12 of the FOIA. To retrieve the information would necessitate manually searching through each incident record. 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).

### 5. How many times did each of the top ten most frequent callers call SECAMB in 2015?

We are able to provide figures for the financial year of 2014/ 2015 below.

Caller	Incidents
1	804
2	307
3	302

4	292
5	289
6	254
7	221
8	199
9	190
10	183

Unfortunately we do not have the figures available for the financial year of 2015/2016 as yet.

**6. What was the total number of callers considered to have been making repeat calls in 2015? (Please include callers who may have only made repeat calls in certain months.)**

Please see response regarding repeat callers in question 1.

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