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Request for Information Reference: 01.23.36

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Email only

1st February 2023

Dear

Freedom of Information Act 2000 – Request for Information

Thank you for submitting a request for information which we received on 16th January 2023 in relation to County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust (the Trust). Your request has been processed under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and I am now able to provide you with a response.

Your request was in relation to Assault attendances and I am providing the following information in response to your specific questions:

I write to you on behalf of the Violence Research Group of Cardiff University. We are conducting an annual national study of attendances to Emergency Departments for assault-related injury and will be grateful if your department could provide us with attendance data for 2022. This data will be used, as in previous years, to analyse trends in violence in England and Wales from injury perspective.

The data we require are as follows (for period 1st January 2022 and 31st December 2022) in an electronic format that allows us to read the data into a database. Many hospitals respond to our survey and provide data in the form we require. Preferably this format is in an excel file or comma separated text file.

Data required (for period between 1st January 2022 and 31st December 2022)

- 1. We require the gender of the patient (M or F), the date that they attended due to assault (dd/mm/yyyy) and their age. Age can either be numerical to the nearest year (preferred) or in age bands ("0-10", "11-17", "18-30", "31-50", "51+"), we can also accept date of birth.**

Please see the attached spreadsheet. The Trust has provided the month of the attendance rather than the specific date as it feels that to disclose this information would breach one of the data protection principles contained in the Data Protection Act 2018 (which supplements the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) which came into effect in May 2018) in that it would render it possible to identify the individuals. We do not believe that it would be fair to the individuals for their identities to be made public. We therefore believe that the exemption contained within section 40 of the Act is engaged.

The Trust has assessed the risk that the identities of the individual patients could be inferred, and judges that possibility to be real. It has therefore taken the decision to withhold this information under Section 40 of the Freedom of Information Act. The Trust is relying, in part, on the absolute exemption available under Section 40(3) (a) (i), where information would be shared in contravention of the principles in the Data Protection Act and the qualified exemption in Section 40(3) (a) (ii), where the numbers published could allow the identify of individual patients to be inferred causing damage or distress to themselves or their families. The Trust has weighed the public interest in preventing that distress with the public interest in transparency and has concluded that the former interest carries greater weight.

- 2. To calculate the level of assault-related injury in England and Wales we also require the total number of attendances for any reason in the year of interest, i.e., 2022.**

193,939

- 3. Please also include the names of hospitals (including Minor Injury Units and Walk-in Centres) providing assault data.**

The assault information provided includes Darlington Memorial Hospital and University Hospital North Durham Emergency Departments. The overall Emergency Department attendees include Peterlee Urgent Care, Bishop Auckland Hospital, University Hospital North Durham, Darlington Memorial Hospital, and Shotley Bridge Hospital.

In line with the Information Commissioner's directive on the disclosure of information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 your request will form part of our disclosure log on the Trust's website. However please be assured that we anonymise all responses prior to adding them to the disclosure log.

I hope that this response has provided you with the information you had requested. If you have any queries or wish to discuss the information supplied, please do not hesitate to contact me by telephone or in writing. If however, you are dissatisfied with the way in which your request has been handled and would like an internal review, you will need to contact me in writing at the above address or via cdda-tr.cddftfoi@nhs.

If you remain dissatisfied with our response following an internal review you have the right to appeal to The Information Commissioner at Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF. More information is available on their website; www.ico.gov.uk.

Yours sincerely

Corporate Records and Freedom of Information Facilitator