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Request for Information Reference: 01.24.81

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Email only

15th February 2024

Dear

Freedom of Information Act 2000 – Request for Information

Thank you for submitting a request for information which we received on 23rd January 2024 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 Physical Assaults and I am providing the following information in response to your specific questions:

I request the following information:

Explanatory Note

The Trust use an incident reporting system whereby all incidents are recorded as incidents no matter the clinical condition of the instigator using general assault headings of physical assault, sexual assault and racial assault.

For the purposes of this response we have used the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) definition of assault as: ‘... any act (and not mere omission to act) by which a person intentionally or recklessly causes another to suffer or apprehend immediate unlawful violence.’

The majority of the incidents listed below have been conducted by patients who do not know what they had done was wrong due to a medical illness and / or confused state of mind, which causes them to lack capacity, often through living with dementia, having delirium, living with a severe learning disability, suffering from mental health

issues or other general incapacity issues. In such cases we are therefore unable to determine whether the use of force was intentional.

All incidents are investigated accordingly no matter the mental capacity of the instigator with outcomes being determined when all relevant information has been reviewed.

- 1. Please can you provide the number of physical assaults against hospital staff by patients and members of the public on the Trusts premises for the following five years: 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023?**

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Physical Assault	290	215	269	319	283

- 2. How many of these physical assaults were reported to the police for the following five years: 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023?**

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Police Involvement	26	26	32	31	34

- 3. If you hold this data, how many had a criminal justice outcome (e.g. cautioned, charged, taken to court) for the following five years: 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023?**

Where the police have detained / arrested an individual the Trust is not formally made aware of the outcome as this information will be solely supplied to the named victim/s.

The Trust is unable to have a data sharing mechanism in place to seek this data released by the police due to their reporting methodology.

- 4. Since 2019 has the Trust introduced any additional measures to try to reduce the number of physical assaults against hospital staff? If so, please specify what measures have been taken e.g. body cameras, CCTV in clinical areas, more security guards etc?**

The Trust review all incidents to gain learning and continually develop enhanced security measures to aid staff welfare, the following measures have been put in place over the reporting period:

- Use of body cameras by security personnel
- Use of body cameras by clinical staff
- Additional CCTV within the emergency department
- Installation of door access systems
- Installation / maintenance of staff attack systems
- Breakaway training for staff

- Violence and aggression risk assessments for all areas to determine types of violence to allow the development of action plans and strategies
- Additional security personnel including 24/7 emergency department staffing
- Increasing access to relevant training (for example in breakaway techniques) for staff
- Enhanced patient behaviour warning letters
- Enhanced birth plans alerting staff of potential risk factors
- Enhanced patient alerts informing staff of potentially dangerous patients
- Regular meetings with police representatives to share intelligence
- Consultation with the police when developing security policies
- Establishment of a violence prevention and reduction (VPR) steering group which is clinically led and discusses incident data and implements safer protocols and practices
- Training around conditions susceptible to confusion, such as Dementia awareness training
- Restraint training for specialist staff groups
- De-escalation training for all staff
- Introduction of TRiM (Trauma Risk Management) incorporating training of specialist facilitators, to support staff after an incident
- Development and introduction of VPR Strategy and Policy
- Sponsoring two staff to undertake courses of study in VPR, which will result in formal qualifications

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