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Request for Information Reference: 03.24.28

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Email only

28th March 2024

Dear

Freedom of Information Act 2000 – Request for Information

Thank you for submitting a request for information which we received on 11th March 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 Postural Tachycardia Syndrome and I am providing the following information in response to your specific questions:

Please consult with cardiology, neurology, emergency medicine, care of the elderly and paediatrics specialties to provide the information requested.

1. How many patients are referred to your Trust annually with a suspected diagnosis of PoTS and how many diagnosed PoTS patients are under active care under specialties within the Trust?

The Trust does not centrally record this information and estimates that it would take a significant amount of time to gather the information requested. In order to gather this information it would require a member of staff to manually examine patient's notes. Therefore, we are refusing this section of your request for information pursuant to section 12 of the Act on the grounds that we estimate that the cost of complying with the request would exceed the appropriate limit. The appropriate limit at the present time is £450.00 which equates to eighteen hours of work by a member of staff at the rate of £25 per hour.

2. Is there evidence of an increase in referrals of PoTS patients since May 2020 due to patients suffering with long-Covid?

There is no current evidence to support a link to long Covid as the data has not been audited.

3. How many patients with a suspected or confirmed diagnosis of PoTS are seen annually in the Emergency Department or admitted as an emergency?

2019	- 7
2020	- 5
2021	- 8
2022	- 23
2023	- 42
2024	- 7

4. To which individual specialty or specialties are PoTS patients referred for investigation, diagnosis and longer-term management? e.g., cardiology, neurology, care of the elderly, paediatrics.

Referrals to Cardiology are not accepted, Some Care of the Elderly CoTE consultants will accept referrals.

Please specify separately for children and adults, where applicable.

There is no paediatric POTS service.

5. Within your Trust do a) adult patients and b) paediatric patients diagnosed with PoTS have access to a specialised PoTS clinic or service for treatment by dedicated clinicians with an interest/expertise in the condition? If so, please provide details of specialised adult and paediatric services in place.

No specialised service within Trust but a referral to PoTS specialist services at a tertiary centre is available.

6. Where dedicated PoTS services are available within your Trust, are there any restrictions in place around acceptance of new referrals or longer-term management of patients? Please specify any restrictions imposed.

Not Applicable

7. **If no specialist PoTS services are in place within your Trust, do you reject referrals (back to referring GP), accept referrals under general acute services e.g., cardiology / neurology (please specify) or refer on to a known specialist service elsewhere? (please specify where).**

If a PoTS referral goes to Cardiology, the referral is rejected and sent back to the GP to refer to a specialist centre, if PoTs is found as part of a workup then a direct referral is made. If referral is via CoTE then diagnostics (Holter and HUT) may be indicated.

NB: Holter and HUT refers to 48-hour Holter monitoring with head-up tilt (HUT) test in patients presenting with blackouts suggestive of vasovagal syncope.

8. **How is activity coded for adult and paediatric patients with a diagnosis of PoTS attending for a first or follow up outpatient appointment or admitted to inpatient care?**

There is no paediatric POTS service. If admitted to inpatient care, POTS would be clinically coded with an I49.8 ICD10 diagnosis code.

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.cddffoi@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