Request for Information Reference: 05.15.16

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Email only

11 June 2015

Freedom of Information Act 2000 – Request for Information

Thank you for your request for information received on 12 May 2015 in relation to the County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust (Trust). We are dealing with your request under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

You requested information regarding the disposal of foetal remains. Specifically you asked for:

**Information regarding the disposal of pregnancy remains (all pregnancy losses prior to 24 weeks):**

1) **How many times pregnancy remains where incinerated with clinical waste in Financial Years:**
   - 2012-13
   - 2013-14
   - 2014-15

Answer: Pregnancy remains are not incinerated with clinical waste.

2) **How many “sensitive incinerations” of pregnancy remains (where the remains are packaged, stored and incinerated separately from other clinical waste) were carried out by the Trust in financial years:**
   - 2012-13
   - 2013-14
   - 2014-15
Answer:

Non-viable foetus (NVF) (16 weeks or less) sent for Cremation Service at Darlington Crematorium:

Total NVF's Sensitive Disposed between 1 April 2012 and 31 March 2013: 1395 individual specimens (28 batches)

Total NVF's Sensitive Disposed between 1 April 2013 and 31 March 2014: 1494 individual specimens (30 batches)

Total NVF's Sensitive Disposed between 1 April 2014 and 31 March 2015: 1200 individual specimens (24 batches)

3) When a “sensitive incineration” is carried out, does the Trust have a policy on how the pregnancy remains are packaged before incineration (i.e. what receptacle are they placed in)? If so, could you provide me with details of that policy?

Answer: Please see the attached.

4) For the total number of cases of incineration of pregnancy remains (whether non-sensitive, or sensitive), could you please provide a breakdown of how many parents:

- Specified they wanted the incineration to occur
- Expressed no desire to be involved in the decision
- Did not express an opinion on the incineration within the 12 week timescale
- Other

Answer: The Trust is unable to provide a breakdown, however choices / information are given in all cases and help is offered to individual families who choose to make private arrangements / take pregnancy remains home.

In each year:

5) The number of official complaints the Trust has received related to any aspect of pregnancy remains disposal, whether incineration, sensitive incineration, cremation (shared or individual), burial (shared or individual), mother deciding to take remains home, at any stage pre, during or post disposal, in the years:

Answer:

- 2012-13: 1
- 2013-14: 1
- 2014-15: 0
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. Therefore, a version of our response which will protect your anonymity will be posted on the County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust website.

If you have any queries or wish to discuss the information supplied, please do not hesitate to contact me on the above telephone number or at the above address.

If you are unhappy with the way your request for information has been handled, you can request a review by writing to:

The Chief Executive
County Durham & Darlington NHS Foundation Trust
Darlington Memorial Hospital
Hollyhurst Road
Darlington
DL3 6HX

If, you remain dissatisfied with the handling of your request or complaint, you have a right to appeal to the Information Commissioner at:

The Information Commissioner’s Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

Telephone: 0303 123 1113
Website: www.ico.gov.uk.

There is no charge for making an appeal.

Yours sincerely

Freedom of Information Officer