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Request for Information Reference: 04.15.27

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Email only

10 May 2016

Freedom of Information Act 2000 – Request for Information

Thank you for your request for information received on 15 April 2016 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 chronic pain services. Specifically you asked for:

I am contacting you under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to request the following information from the relevant department, directorate or division in your Trust that has responsibility for delivering Pain Medicine or Chronic Pain Services, including the finance and performance aspects of the service.

My purpose in making this request is to research the variations (if any) in how this figure is being calculated as the nature of Chronic Pain services run within a multidisciplinary team means that follow ups are counted very differently in different units, for example some units count attendance at a pain management program over several weeks as a therapy and do not include it in the new:fu ratio others count every attendance.

FOI Questions.

1. The definition of calculation used for new to follow up ratios for chronic pain referrals.

Answer: The first appointment seen in the unit (by any medic or therapist) is deemed a 'new patient', each and every contact thereafter is individual or group treatment, therapy or consultation is deemed a 'follow up'

2. The data for new to follow up for chronic pain referrals for your trust for the years April 2010 to April 2015

Answer: Please see attached sheet

3. *Is the calculation used for new and follow-up in Chronic Pain a local or national definition?*

County Durham and Darlington Foundation Trust is relatively unique in its MDT approach to Pain Management. As outlined above we count all 'first appointments' as new patients and all other contacts as 'reviews'. This then ensures all data is captured to give a true picture of the new to review ratio.

4. *Can you provide the wording of the definition used?*

Answer: The national guidance is simply "new" patients are first attenders and "total attends" covers the follow up / review appointments.

5. *Does the New to follow up ratio calculation that is used by your organisation for Chronic Pain also apply to other specialties?*

Answer: Each speciality is different and may have unique formats so for a full picture you would need to speak to the relevant speciality that you were enquiring about

6. *If no - please explain the differences in the calculations.*

Answer: As above

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

Joanna Tyrrell
Freedom of Information Officer