

Executive Corridor
Darlington Memorial Hospital
Hollyhurst Road
Darlington
DL3 6HX
Switchboard Tel: 01325 38 0100
Foundation Trust Office: 01325 74 3625
Corporate Records Office: 01325 74 3700

Request for Information Reference: 01.17.10

Direct line: 01325 743700
Email: cdda-tr.cddftfoi@nhs.net

Email only

9 February 2017

Freedom of Information Act 2000 – Request for Information

Thank you for your request for information received on 16 January 2017 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 bowel management for spinal cord injuries. Specifically you asked for:

Information on bowel management for spinal cord injured people and others with neurogenic bowel dysfunction:

- 1. Does the Trust have a formal written policy for digital rectal examination/check, digital rectal stimulation and the digital removal of faeces (manual bowel evacuation) in spinal cord injured and other patients with neurogenic bowel dysfunction?***

Answer: There is a DRE/DRF policy (attached), it is not specifically for neurogenic patients but does encompass bowel care for this group of patients including DRE/DRF/DRS. Please note, the policy is currently under review and a revised copy will be submitted to committee for approval before the end of this month.

- 2. If the Trust does, please supply a copy of this document.***

Answer: Please see the attached policy.

3. If the Trust does not, how is bowel care managed in the above patient groups who present with this care need?

Answer: N/A.

4. Does the Trust employ a specialist continence nurse(s)?

Answer: Yes, there is a team of continence specialist nurses based at Bishop Auckland Hospital within the Continence Service. The team comprises 2 x band 7, 2 x band 6 (specialist nurses) and 4 x band 5 continence staff nurses. There are also 2 Bowel Specialist Nurses based in the Durham Constipation Clinic (DCC) in University Hospital North Durham who see patients with functional bowel disorders (predominantly chronic constipation) and also faecal incontinence. This includes some patients with neurogenic bowels.

5. If the Trust employs a specialist continence nurse(s) can they:-

(a) Undertake digital rectal checks, digital rectal stimulation and digital removal of faeces (manual bowel evacuation), otherwise known as 'intimate digital bowel care procedures'

Answer: Yes. Whilst the continence nurses/ bowel specialist nurses are trained in the above procedures/checks, on-going care is usually performed by community nurses.

(b) Provide instruction to other nurses to enable them to perform intimate digital bowel care procedures'?

Answer: Yes, there is a programme of Constipation training which is facilitated and delivered by the Continence Team Leads (primary care) in conjunction with Durham Constipation Clinic (DCC) (secondary care). 4 sessions per year are offered. There are 2 x full day training sessions for nurses new to DRE/DRF/DRS and also 2 x half day updates per year for those staff wanting an update on these skills. All the sessions comprise constipation management and also include management of the neurogenic bowel as a specific presentation. The full day training includes an assessment of DRE skills. All the training is based on RCN guidelines and evidence based practice.

6. If the Trust does not employ a specialist continence nurse, is there another health care professional who undertakes intimate digital bowel care procedures including manual bowel evacuation? If yes, who does this?

Answer: Please see above.

7. Does your Trust have a policy in place that will allow your staff to do trans-anal irrigation (TAI) of the bowel as a method of bowel care management for spinal cord injured patients? Do you train your staff to do TAI/ bowel irrigation?

Answer: Yes, TAI is initiated in primary care by Continence Specialist nurses with consent from the patients GP. In primary care, community nurses may also be trained to assist the patient with TAI. This training is undertaken by Continence Specialist Nurses. In secondary care, Bowel Specialist Nurses within the Durham Constipation Clinic regularly teach patients (including some patients with neurogenic bowels) how to undertake this procedure. They may be referred on to the Continence Team for extra support if applicable. The two services (DCC and Continence Service) work closely together.

8. Do you run bowel care courses for your staff that allows them to deliver the full range of bowel care required by spinal cord injured patients or others with a neurogenic bowel?

Answer: Yes (please see the answer to question 5).

9. If yes, please provide details. If no, does the Trust have a policy which allows for the personal care assistants (PAs) of spinal cord injured patients to assist with this element of the patient's care?

Answer: Yes, please see the attached agendas and flyer for more information regarding content of training.

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