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Request for Information Reference: 09.17.03

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Email only

11 October 2017

Freedom of Information Act 2000 – Request for Information

Thank you for your request for information received on 5 September 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 Wheelchair services. Specifically you asked for:

All of the information that I require concerns County Durham and Darlington (NHS) Foundation Trust's Wheelchair Services.

- 1. Is the Wheelchair Service a stand-alone service within the Trust? This is with reference to the funding that it receives from the Trust to run its services.***

Answer: Yes, It does have input from RREMS (Regional Rehabilitation Engineering and Mobility Service).

- 2. How many personnel are employed with the Wheelchair Services department or sector?***

Answer: 5 wte

- 3. Over the period 2007 – 2017, on a yearly basis please furnish numbers as to how many staff has been directly employed within the Wheelchair Services department or sector.***

Answer: It's not possible to list each year due to structural and recording changes within the Trust; however in 2007 the position was:

Answer: 6.67 wte

The current position is: 5 wte

4. Have any employees been made redundant or been redeployed away from the Wheelchair Services Department since 2007?

Answer: None.

5. Has the workload of Wheelchair Services increased during the past ten years?

Answer: Yes.

6. Are there any plans to decrease the funding allocated to Wheelchair Services during the next financial year?

Answer: No

7. Have there been regular yearly cuts in the funding received by Wheelchair Services, over the past five years?

Answer: In accordance with all NHS organisations, the Trust has to work to the financial envelope available in each year.

8. How long, on average, does it take for a disabled person to be seen by the Wheelchair Department, upon referral?

Answer: The wheelchair service is currently moving to a whole service approach supported by a move to a new electronic patient system which will provide both record keeping and performance data e.g. waiting lists for service management.

The current service model has been reviewed and the service aims that within 6 months we are at an 18 week wait position for none urgent referrals. Within a year we aim for this position to be further improved. Urgent referrals are prioritised and seen within 4 weeks.

9. How long on average, does it take an amputee to receive a 'platform' to support their amputated stump, after a request to Wheelchair Services?

Answer: Variable depending on chair model and stock availability, standard models usually available in stock, this is a fitting priority for the service.

10. After referral to Wheelchair Services and a visit to the wheelchair clinic, how long on average does a patient have to wait to receive a/ or new wheelchair?

Answer: 'Next steps' document advises up to 16 weeks, again depends on stock availability. A stock chair will take an average of 2 weeks, none standard chairs -which are prescribed in instances where greater configurability are required - are a specialist order and are subject to availability. The wheelchair therapist will always look at reconditioned chairs that are in stock and that may be appropriate for a patient as this pathway mitigates the wait time.

11. Has the span of this wait increased since 2012?

Answer: Yes due to staffing issues however this is being addressed as per point 8 above.

12. How many a. verbal and b. written complaints has the Trust received re Wheelchair services during the last three years?

Answer: There have been 20 complaints received relating to wheelchair services within the last 3 years.

13. Are there any plans to further reduce staffing in Wheelchair Services?

Answer: No.

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