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Request for Information Reference: 06.18.18

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Email only

10 July 2018

### **Freedom of Information Act 2000 – Request for Information**

Thank you for your request for information received on 13 June 2018 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 reporting of diagnostic images. Specifically you asked:

***Did your Trust outsource the reporting of diagnostic images to any teleradiology companies over the past 5 years? If so, for each company, please provide the name of the teleradiology provider along with the information in the table below (where available).***

Answer: The Trust has outsourced the reporting of diagnostic images to a teleradiology company during the time period specified. The name of that organisation is Medica Reporting.

For Section 2 we have supplied the Number of reports outsourced. We are unable to provide the number of scan images in outsourced reports as the information is not held.

For the remainder of the information required, namely the breakdown of spend by reporting type, we are exempting the information as requested under Section 43(2) of the FOIA on the grounds that this information would be likely to prejudice the commercial interests of the Trust and those of our third party supplier.

To disclose costs per reporting type in conjunction with related volumes, would enable unit prices to be calculated. We have been advised by Medica Reporting that the resulting unit prices are still relevant to live and anticipated frameworks and tenders; therefore there is proximity to the harm that could arise. Specifically the ability to identify unit costs would be likely to influence the pricing strategy of competing suppliers in future tenders, risking removal of a level playing field in any such tender. There is clearly a public interest in seeking to preserve fair competition in any future tenders (or contract negotiations) which this Trust, or other healthcare providers, may run, both in terms of the NHS's ability to secure value for money from taxpayers funds and the preservation of fair market competition.

Section 43 (2) of the Act allows a public authority to exempt information from publication which would be likely, if disclosed, to harm the commercial interests of that authority or a third party where the public interest in preventing that harm outweighs the public interest in disclosure. In this case, the Trust considers that the latter is the general interest in transparency surrounding expenditure by public authorities.

In previous information tribunals, the Information Commissioner has noted that the operation of the FOIA is not intended to prejudice fair market competition between suppliers. The Trust therefore considers that the balance of the public interest in this case lies in preventing the likelihood of prejudice to the interests of our supplier and the Trust, and is therefore exempting the requested information under Section 43(2) of the Act".

Company name	Fiscal Years (ending in March)	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
<b>Medica</b>						
<b>Amount spent on outsourced reporting (GBP)</b>						
	Day-time reporting - Plain radiography	Information Exempted as noted above				
	Day-time reporting - CT					
	Day-time reporting - MRI					
	Day-time reporting - Nuclear medicine					
	Day-time reporting - PET					
	Day-time reporting - SPECT					
	Day-time reporting - Ultrasound					
	Out of hours reporting*					
	Specialist scan reporting**					
	Urgent scan reporting***					
	Second opinion reporting****					
<i>Number of reports outsourced</i>	<b>Unable to provide information</b>					
	Day-time reporting - Plain radiography	50499	36097	29406	57176	87470
	Day-time reporting - CT	7810	10008	7747	10707	11907
	Day-time reporting - MRI	4421	5155	2963	5150	5706
	Day-time reporting - Nuclear medicine	0	0	0	0	0
	Day-time reporting - PET	0	0	0	0	0
	Day-time reporting - SPECT	0	0	0	0	0
	Day-time reporting - Ultrasound	0	0	0	0	0

	Out of hours reporting*	5927	8272	8750	9554	15869
	Specialist scan reporting**	0	125	112	0	6
	Urgent scan reporting***	0	0	0	0	0
	Second opinion reporting****	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Number of scan images in outsourced reports</b>						
	Day-time reporting - Plain radiography	Information not held as noted above.				
	Day-time reporting - CT					
	Day-time reporting - MRI					
	Day-time reporting - Nuclear medicine					
	Day-time reporting - PET					
	Day-time reporting - SPECT					
	Day-time reporting - Ultrasound					
	Out of hours reporting*					

\*out of hours reporting occurs after 18:00 on weekdays and on weekends and bank holidays or as defined by the trust

\*\*specialist scan reporting occurs where the report must be produced by a doctor with a particular specialisation

\*\*\*urgent reporting consists of instances where a premium is paid for the delivery of the report in under 24 hours

\*\*\*\*second opinion reporting consists of instances where the scan has previously been reported on by another doctor

If a breakdown of day-time reporting is not available or utilised by the Trust, please provide a comparable breakdown that is used internally. If no breakdown is available, please provide the information above by Plain radiography, CT, MRI, Nuclear medicine, PET, SPECT and Ultrasound.

***Please provide details related to the procurement of the teleradiology services including:***

- ***Identification of the organisation that led the procurement process?***

Answer: The Trusts' internal Procurement Team managed the Procurement and used the North of England CPC Radiology Framework.

- ***The start date and length of the contract?***

Answer: The current contract is from 02/06/2018 for a period of 36 months with the option to extend for a further 12 months-

- ***The name of the outsourcing company providing the teleradiology services (if more than 1 company provided teleradiology services to the Trust, please clarify which services were provided by each)?***

Answer: The Trust used Medica Reporting as our Teleradiology partner over the period in question.

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](http://www.ico.gov.uk).

There is no charge for making an appeal.

Yours sincerely

**Joanna Tyrrell**  
**Freedom of Information Officer**