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Request for Information Reference: 08.18.28

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Email only

10 September 2018

Freedom of Information Act 2000 – Request for Information

Thank you for your request for information received on 15 August 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 Pathology Laboratory. Specifically you asked for:

1. *Does the Pathology Laboratory in your organisation use Demand Management to manage Pathology requests?*

Answer: Partially used in an electronic format, partially used in a manual format.

2. *If the Pathology Laboratory does not make use of Demand Management, why not?*

Answer: This is not fully set up as an electronic process yet as this requires IT support to build system rules which were not inbuilt at the time of system implementation.

3. *If the Pathology Laboratory does make use of Demand Management, what methods do you use? Eg. Is it carried out at time of request, using a function of electronic requesting software or are unnecessary requests screened out once the sample reaches the laboratory?*

Answer: The demand management processes in use at present are only carried out once the requests reach the laboratory – electronic functions and manual screening.

4. Which Pathology disciplines use demand management the most?

Answer: Immunology (electronic) and biochemistry (clinical staff manual screening).

5. What tests is demand management most frequently used for?

Answer: This data is not collected routinely at present and would take further time to identify.

6. How many samples did the Pathology Laboratory in your organisation process last year (April 17-March 18)?

Answer: 11.7 million individual tests as reported to NHSI data collection requirements.

**7. How many samples were not tested due to being screened out by using demand management techniques?
a. How is this measured?**

Answer: Unable to state accurately as requests are registered routinely and resulted using a text comment.

Current system unable to identify without manual audit to supply the number would require the review of patient notes which would take over the permitted timescale within the act therefore; we are refusing this section of your request for information pursuant to section 12 of the Act on the grounds that we estimate that the cost of complying with the request would exceed the appropriate limit. The appropriate limit at the present time is £450.00 which equates to eighteen and a quarter hours of work by a member of staff at the rate of £25 per hour.

**8. Does your organisation promote demand management to clinical staff who request pathology tests?
a. How is it promoted?**

Answer: Pathology management are in the process of developing more widespread and robust demand management across all pathology disciplines, and are about to start a programme of engagement with clinical staff in September on management at source using the RCPATH guidelines (using clinical meetings, developing posters and screensavers as reminders), and developing a task & finish project to implement electronic demand management in our current IT system.

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