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Darlington Memorial Hospital
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Request for Information Reference: 02.19.59

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Email only

22 March 2019

Freedom of Information Act 2000 – Request for Information

Thank you for your request for information received on 26 February 2019 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 details of assessment to allow assisted suicide or euthanasia. Specifically you requested information as follows:

Parliament is likely to have draft legislation presented to it in coming months calling for a change in the law to allow, assisted suicide and or euthanasia – sometimes referred to as “assisted dying”. In Oregon and Washington, two of the US states that have legalised assisted suicide, there have been documented cases of those with terminal illnesses being refused life-saving, or life-extending medication, while offered the drugs to kill themselves. In these cases, the high cost of treatment was given as a reason for the denial of medication.

Please can you provide me with a copy of, or details of the assessment that your organisation has carried out on the impact of changing the law to allow assisted suicide or euthanasia, in particular, I am keen to see how this will impact the following:

- a) A possible reduction, or redeployment of clinical staff away from palliative care?***
- b) Any possible financial savings?***
- c) Figures on the numbers of people who might opt to end their lives this way?***

d) Any assessment of how this will impact on your organisation's suicide reduction plan?

e) Any assessment of how this will impact on the mental health of your staff?

f) Any assessment of additional costs associated with possible litigation against both medical staff and your organisation?

County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust replies:

The Trust has made no assessment and has no plans to make an assessment of any potential future changes in the law on assisted suicide.

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