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Request for Information Reference: 03.19.32

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Email only

17 April 2019

Freedom of Information Act 2000 – Request for Information

Thank you for your request for information received on 21 March 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 sharps. Specifically you requested information as follows:

I am making a request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 about the way your organisation deals with sharps, specifically non-anticipated sharps.

Definition of ‘non-anticipated’

By ‘non-anticipated’, I mean sharps that do not originate with equipment owned or used by your organisation. Examples include hypodermics from drug users who are your patients, clients or service users; broken bottles and crockery; self-harm implements from your patients, clients or service users or weapons.

1. Do you have policies or procedures for dealing with sharps?

- The Trust uses the Blood Borne Virus (BBV) Policy – please see the attached.
- Incidents are investigated by the Health & Safety Team by speaking to the individual to determine the cause and confirming that they have followed the BBV Policy.
- Staff Health & Wellbeing Team/ Occupational Health follow the BBV Policy – please see the attached. All sharps are dealt with via this policy

2. If so, do you treat all sharps the same or do you have separate policies or procedures for non-anticipated sharps?

- The Health & Safety Team treats all sharps the same with respect to investigation, action and learning.

- The Staff Health & Wellbeing team has risk assessments which are undertaken following any sharps injury to determine cause and risk. Clinicians then deal with incidents in the most appropriate manner

3. Can I please have a copy of these policies and procedures?

Answer: Please see the attached.

4. How many times did you need to deal with non-anticipated sharps in the past five years?

Answer: Figures below are provided with respect to incidents involving ‘non-anticipated’ sharps and violence and aggression against staff.

Period	Incidents
2014	7
2015	15
2016	16
2017	14
2018	25
2019b (Jan – Mar)	3

There were 10 further non anticipated sharps injuries during 2018/19 to the date of your request – one was as a result of standing on a rusty screw, one member of staff was cut with a patient’s razor (not deliberate) and eight were the result of needlestick injuries from patient’s own insulin devices (needles left lying around by patient or left on machine by patient).

Due to the number of incidents that have been reported over the past five years it would take a number of days to review the incidents to see what fell within the remit of this request. It was possible to review the 2018/19 due to changes in the reporting system. The Trust does not hold this data, for earlier years, in a format that could easily provide the information requested. Manual analysis, 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 hours of work by a member of staff at the rate of £25 per hour.

5. How long (on average) has it taken you to deal with non-anticipated sharps (in the past five years)?

Answer: All sharps injuries are dealt with as soon as the staff member contacts Occupational Health (in-hours) or A&E (out of hours). An initial assessment is undertaken as per the policy and all follow up is undertaken by Occupational Health according to the Policy and National Guidance.

6. What is the longest that it has taken you to deal with a non-anticipated sharp (in the past five years)?

Answer: The maximum time for initial treatment for a non-anticipated sharps injury is within 30 minutes.

7. How many times have you not followed your own procedures in dealing with non-anticipated sharps (in the past five years)?

- The Health & Safety Team has followed their procedures in all incidents.
- The Staff Health & Wellbeing/ Occupational Health have followed all procedures in all incidents also.

All incidents have been formally reported through the incident management system and as such would have been deemed dealt with in the appropriate manner.

8. Where your procedures were not followed, what actions did you take to ensure better practice in the future?

Answer: N/A.

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