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Darlington Memorial Hospital
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Request for Information Reference: 04.19.13

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Email only

8 May 2019

Freedom of Information Act 2000 – Request for Information

In correspondence with the Trust's Communications Department, you requested a number of items of information which the Trust has determined fall within the scope of the Freedom of Information Act. We are dealing with your request under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

You requested information regarding Blue badge car parking. Specifically you requested information as follows:

Question 1 - How many Trust committee members, who fill the requirement for a disabled badge are/were on the committee when this decision (to charge blue badge holders for parking) was made?

Answer: None of the Committee members which approved the policy fulfil the requirement for a disabled blue badge. All of the Committee members receive training in equality, diversity and inclusion in line with the Trust's mandatory training programme.

Question 2 - Who had the qualification to declare this policy decision disabled friendly i.e. took into consideration how this would affect a protected group and assessed the short and long term impact? I would like to see the impact assessment.

Answer: The equality impact assessment was completed by the policy owner and reviewed as part of the policy approval. The policy, including the impact assessment is attached.

Question 3 - If all revenue, less costs of equipment/management and recovery of defaulters penalty payments, goes to a fund that pays towards staff and equipment then this begs the question of why are people being made to pay twice for the same service?

Answer: In essence, any revenue over and above the costs of equipment, car park servicing, security and debt recovery, is added to the Trust's income and reinvested in patient care. The excess revenue helps to mitigate the impact of financial pressures and assists in protecting front-line services.

Question 4 - Taken that there may be local issues that impact on Trusts actions was a local consultation at each location held?

In keeping with the majority of Trusts, the Trust did not consult publicly on what was, in essence, a change to its charging scheme rather than a service change.

In your correspondence you expressed a number of views as to the disadvantages of the Trust's policy and asked further questions concerning its appropriateness. As these questions do not pertain to information which is already held within the Trust's records, they are not covered by the scope of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and therefore not captured in this response.

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