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Request for Information Reference 06.19.09

Direct line: 01325 743700  
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Email only

4 July 2019

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

Thank you for your request for information received on 6 June 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 resources to support safe and timely management of hyperkalaemia (high level of potassium in the blood). Specifically you requested information as follows:

### **Questions for consideration**

***In 2018 NHS Improvement issued a Patient Safety Alert (PSA), entitled [Resources to support safe and timely management of hyperkalaemia \(high level of potassium in the blood\)](#) which outlined specific actions for NHS trusts to implement in order to improve safety for patients at risk of hyperkalaemia. The deadline for completion was 8<sup>th</sup> May 2019. NHS Improvement's recommendations were to:***

- 1) Identify a senior clinician in the organisation to lead the response to the alert***
- 2) Review or produce local guidance (including key steps or easy reference guides) for the management of hyperkalaemia that aligns with the evidence-based sources highlighted by NHS Improvement***
- 3) Ensure that local guidance can be easily accessed by all staff including bank and agency staff***
- 4) Ensure relevant guidance and resources are embedded in clinical practice by revising local training and audit***
- 5) Use local communication strategies to make all staff aware that hyperkalaemia is a potentially life-threatening condition and that its***

*timely identification, treatment and monitoring during and beyond initial treatment is essential*

*I would like to request information which sets out what steps the Trust has taken to implement each of the recommended actions (1 to 5) outlined in the Management of Hyperkalaemia PSA.*

*Specifically, I request the following information relating to the PSA:*

- 1. Has a senior clinician in the Trust been appointed to lead the response to this alert?*

	<i>Your response</i>
<i>If yes, please name the individual</i>	
<i>If no, please specify the reason for the lack of appointment and anticipated timelines for an appointment to be made</i>	

- 2. Has the Trust reviewed existing - or produced new - local guidance for the management of hyperkalaemia?*

	<i>Your response</i>
<i>If yes, please share the relevant guidance and provide details of any changes made during the review</i>	
<i>If no, please specify why this has not taken place and any future plans to do so</i>	

- 3. Has the Trust taken steps to ensure that local guidance can be easily accessed by all staff?*

	<i>Your response</i>
<i>If yes, please outline the specific measures taken</i>	
<i>If no, please specify the reasons why not and any future plans to do so</i>	

- 4. Has the Trust revised local training and audit to ensure that relevant guidance and resources are embedded in clinical practice?*

	<i>Your response</i>
<i>If yes, please outline the specific measures taken and signpost to updated documents</i>	
<i>If no, please specify the reasons why not and any future timelines in doing so</i>	

**5. Has the Trust used local communication strategies to raise staff awareness of hyperkalaemia diagnosis and treatment?**

	<i>Your response</i>
<i>If yes, please specify the measures taken</i>	
<i>If no, please specify the reasons why and any future plans to do so</i>	

**County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust replies:**

Please see the attached two documents.

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**