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Request for Information Reference: 09.19.18

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Email only

4 October 2019

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

Thank you for your request for information received on 6 September 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 robotic process automation solutions. Specifically you requested information as follows:

***I am writing to make an information request regarding Robotic Process Automation solutions used at your organisation. Please complete the FOI questions below.***

***Robotic Process Automation (RPA) is software which can automate manual, computer-based tasks by using virtual workers which mimic the way humans interact with applications on a computer. As a result, RPA can drive efficiencies in corporate services by increasing productivity, reducing staff workload and generating cost savings.***

#### ***RPA Budgets***

***1a. Does your organisation have a dedicated budget for investing in RPA? If yes, please provide your organisations RPA budget for 19/20***

Answer: No.

***1b. To date, how much has the organisation invested in RPA solutions?***

Answer: N/A.

### **RPA Supplier**

**2a. Does your organisation use a third-party to provide an RPA software solution? If yes, please provide the name of the supplier (e.g. Thoughtonomy, Automation Anywhere, UiPath, Blue Prism etc.)**

Answer: RPA Blue Prism.

**2b. Please provide a brief description as to the project the RPA provider is undertaking/has undertaken at the organisation (e.g. reporting, system integration, tax management etc.) including which departments within the organisation this is/has been implemented**

Answer:

- **NOTE: The RPA provider is not actively partaking in any projects. The RPA software tool has been used by organization in the following areas:**
- **Data Migration:** When required but not routinely
- **Onboarding / Off-Boarding staff:** Yes
- **Other :** Automation of some transactional processes where interfacing is not available between systems

**2c. How many employees (headcount) are involved in the operationalisation of the RPA solution at your organisation post-implementation?**

Answer: 2.

**2d. Please state the start and end date of the contract with the supplier**

Answer: 2016- 2025.

**2e. Did the organisation use a framework to procure these services? If yes, please provide the name of the framework**

Answer: The organisation did use a framework to procure these services. The name of the framework is ESPO pro 5.

**2f. please provide detail on how the RPA provider has charged the organisation? (E.g. costing by development and consultancy day rates, annual/monthly license fees, additional fees for bespoke services)**

Answer: Annual support for software.

**2g. what was the annual cost to the organisation for the provision of the RPA solution in 18/19?**

Answer: The Trust considers that this information should be exempted in accordance with Section 43(2) of the Act. The annual cost comprises a fixed fee covering the system and support, provided in a tender by the supplier.

The supplier has made strong representations to the Trust that disclosure of that fixed fee would be likely to harm their commercial interests, as it would make available to other customers and to competitors the price agreed with the Trust, increasing the risk that:

- a. A competitor could seek to undercut the supplier's price
- b. There could be prejudice to pricing negotiations between the supplier and other customers for similar services / in similar markets

The Trust considers that the exemption in Section 43(2) is therefore engaged.

The Trust acknowledges the public interest in transparency of reporting on expenditure on services. However, the Trust considers that this is outweighed by the public interest in preserving fair market competition for suppliers of services to public authorities (in this case, NHS Trusts).

We are therefore exempting the information under Section 43(2).

Section 43 (2) exempts from disclosure the following:

(2) Information, the disclosure of which would, or would be likely to, prejudice the commercial interests of any person including those of the public authority holding the information.

**2h. has your organisation seen any quantifiable benefits through the use of your RPA solution provider? Please provide details on the benefits achieved (e.g. reduced time spent on task by X%, saved X amount of hours per task per month, achieved savings of X amount)**

Answer: Not quantified.

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.



County Durham  
and Darlington  
NHS Foundation Trust

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