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Request for Information Reference: 01.21.25

Email: [cdda-tr.cddftfoi@nhs.net](mailto:cdda-tr.cddftfoi@nhs.net)  
Email only

10 February 2021

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

Thank you for submitting a request for information which we received on 11 January 2021 in relation to County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust (the Trust). Your request has been processed under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and I am now able to provide you with a response.

Your request was in relation to surgical swabs and I am providing the following information in response to your specific questions:

This is a freedom of information request regarding swabs (surgical gauze swabs) that are used in obstetrics (birth packs, suture kits etc.) and open surgeries such as laparotomies and incidents where swabs have been accidentally left within a patient.

**1. Within the last 3 years, have there been any incidents recorded where a gauze swab was retained in the body cavity of a patient?**

Extraction Criteria – Trust Incident Management System

Cause 1: Retained Foreign Object Post-Operation

Reported Date from 01/01/2018 to 13/01/2021

Excluded: Items not related to swabs (surgical gauze swabs)

Excluded: Items intentionally left for removal later

Excluded: Items identified during the counting processes and before the completion of the procedure

There are no incidents reported within the last 3 years in which a gauze swab was retained in the body cavity of a patient.

**1a. If yes, was compensation paid to the patient(s)?**

N/A.

**2. What was the total value of compensation paid to the patient(s)?**

N/A.

3. With regards to purchasing, how many procedure packs and swabs packs were purchased in the last complete financial year? Please provide your responses in the table below if possible, indicating in the table if the data supplied relates to individual packs or carton quantities? If carton quantities (the number of boxes of product ordered) are provided, please also state the number of packs supplied per carton?

Product Type	Number of packs purchased*	Additional information re: number of packs per carton
Birth packs (standard delivery packs containing gauze swabs and other supplies)		
Suture packs (e.g. used to repair vaginal tears containing gauze swabs and other supplies)	37	Cases of 20
Laparotomy packs		
Swab packs (packs of 5 swabs used in surgery to pack open wounds, absorb blood etc).	598,678	Units

4. Regarding brands and suppliers, which brands of product are being used and who is supplying them?

Product Type	Brands used	Supplied by
Birth packs (standard delivery packs containing gauze swabs and other supplies)		
Suture packs (e.g. used to repair vaginal tears containing gauze swabs and other supplies)	Robinsons Healthcare	NHS Supply Chain
Laparotomy packs		
Swab packs (packs of 5 swabs used in surgery to pack open wounds, absorb blood etc).		NHS Supply Chain Vernacare Unisurge Rociale

5. Are any of the following swab safety products purchased for used in surgery? These products are safety products designed to help clinicians count swabs in and out of the body.

- SwabSafe™ (Central Medical Supplies)
- Surgicount™ (Stryker)
- Situate™ (Medtronic)

Darlington Memorial Hospital (DMH) Theatres use the Swab safe from Central Medical Supplies.

Bishop Auckland Hospital (BAH) and University Hospital of North Durham (UHND) use plastic hanging bag receiver for swabs.

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 on the Trust's website. However please be assured that we anonymise all responses prior to adding them to the disclosure log.

I hope that this response has provided you with the information you had requested. If you have any queries or wish to discuss the information supplied, please do not hesitate to contact me by telephone or in writing. If however, you are dissatisfied with the way in which your request has been handled and would like an internal review, you will need to contact me in writing at the above address or via [cdda-tr.cddftfoi@nhs](mailto:cdda-tr.cddftfoi@nhs).

If you remain dissatisfied with our response following an internal review you have the right to appeal to The Information Commissioner at Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF. More information is available on their website; [www.ico.gov.uk](http://www.ico.gov.uk).

Yours sincerely

**Joanna Tyrrell**  
**Freedom of Information Officer**