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Request for Information Reference: 06.21.08

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Email only

21 July 2021

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

Thank you for submitting a request for information which we received on 3 June 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 pagers/bleeps and I am providing the following information in response to your specific questions:

**Under the FOI Act, please provide the following information, with "pagers" used as a synonym for "bleeps":**

**1. As at 31 May 2021, how many pagers were in use in your Trust?**

575.

**2. For the financial year ending 31 March 2021, what is the total annualised cost of pagers (broken down by equipment rental, licences, low value equipment replacement, maintenance of infrastructure, depreciation on capital assets and any other costs)?**

We are unable to provide the information as requested on the grounds that this information is commercially sensitive and has, therefore, been withheld pursuant to Section 43 of the Act.

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.

Our supplier has made clear representation that pricing for the equipment rental, licences, low value equipment replacement, maintenance of infrastructure, depreciation on capital assets and any other costs is commercially sensitive

information. The disclosure of this information would be likely to prejudice the supplier's commercial interests, as it would provide alternative bidders with an understanding of their costs (which would not be reciprocated) with respect to similar contracts in the NHS. This would undermine the supplier's ability to tender, on fair and equal terms, for such contracts. The Trust considers that there is potential for such harm to arise with reasonable proximity and, therefore, that the exemption under Section 43(2) of the Act is engaged.

The Trust acknowledges the public interest in publication of the information; specifically the interest in transparency with respect to expenditure on services, as a means of assisting the taxpayer in evaluating their value for money. However, there is a competing public interest in preserving fair market competition and the ability of public authorities to obtain value for money when sourcing services. In previous rulings the Information Commissioner has made clear that the Freedom of Information Act is not intended to distort fair market competition. In this case, the Trust therefore considers that the public interest in preserving fair competition outweighs the general public interest in transparency and is therefore applying the exemption under Section 43(2).

**3. What stage of procurement and implementation is your Trust currently at and what are the achieved and proposed times for the various steps (e.g. business case approved, tender issued, contract awarded, implementation started, test system is live/user acceptance testing, deployed system is live)?**

Deployed Live system

**4. If a contract has been awarded, which pager replacement system has your Trust selected?**

Multitone Electronics

**5. What additional features does your proposed (or implemented) pager replacement system have, compared with previous capability? (e.g. integration with electronic patient record)**

None.

**6. How many \*users\* and how many \*devices\* will the pager replacement system have?**

575 devices

**7. What is the estimated total annualised cost of the replacement system (broken down by equipment rental, licences, low value equipment replacement, maintenance of infrastructure, depreciation on capital assets and any other costs)?**

We are unable to provide the information as requested on the grounds that this information is commercially sensitive and has, therefore, been withheld pursuant to Section 43 of the Act.

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**8. Will the Trust retain some pagers for \*emergency\* communications or will emergency communications be handled by the pager replacement system? If some pagers are being retained, how many?**

100.

**9. If the pager replacement system fails, what will be used as a backup system? (e.g. do you have plans to use staff personal devices?)**

Resilience has been built into the paging system

**10. Is the Trust on course to phase out pagers for \*non-emergency\* communications by 31 December 2021? If not, by when?**

There is a plan in place to deliver this by the end of December 2021

**11. Is there a benefits realisation plan or post-implementation monitoring plan in place?**

Yes.

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  
**Freedom of Information Officer**