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Request for Information Reference: 04.22.51

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Email only

11th May 2022

Freedom of Information Act 2000 – Request for Information

Thank you for submitting a request for information which we received on 26th April 2022 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 Robotic Process Automation (RPA)/Intelligent Automation technology and I am providing the following information in response to your specific questions:

Does your organisation currently use Robotic Process Automation (RPA)/Intelligent Automation technology?

Yes

If no:

- 1. Are you intending on exploring the possible implementation of RPA technology in 22/23?**
- 2. Who would be the best point of contact within the organisation to discuss Robotic Process Automation with, and what are their contact details?**
- 3. Which EPR does your organisation use?**
- 4. Which PAS does your organisation use?**
- 5. Which patient communication (appointment management tool) does your trust use?**

Not applicable

If yes:

1. Which RPA technology provider does your organisation currently use?

BluePrism Cloud

2. Who is the project managing the RPA programme within your Trust, and what are their contact details?

David Stafford - david.stafford@nhs.net

3. How many licenses are in place under your current contract?

Not applicable. They are based on the number of worker server platforms with unlimited processes

4. What is the current annual spend with your supplier for RPA – split between licence costs and professional services?

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 annual spend of license costs and professional services is commercially sensitive information, the disclosure of which would be likely to prejudice their 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, thereby undermining their 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).

5. How many processes have you got live?

4

6. What is the contract start date?

June 2020

7. What is the contract end date?

June 2025

8. Which EPR does your organisation use?

Cerner (Acute in process of implementation currently) and TPP SystemOne (Community)

9. Which PAS does your organisation use?

Cerner (in process of implementation currently)

10. Which patient communication (appointment management tool) does your trust use?

Cerner (in process of implementation currently), Remind Plus, Health Call (in process of implementation)

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.

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.

Yours sincerely

Corporate Records and Freedom of Information Facilitator