

Freedom of Information Act 2000

The Freedom of Information Act gives members of the public a right to access information - apart from a small number of exemptions e.g. information involving patient records - held by the Trust. The Act is aimed at encouraging more openness and transparency in the NHS and North East Ambulance Service (NEAS) fully supports this aim.

Under the Act, NEAS has already produced a 'Publication Scheme', which is a list of information and documents made available now to the public on request.

From 1st January 2005, members of the public will have full access rights to much more information.

From January, anybody can ask for the information they are interested in, and they do not have to explain why. The Act gives people the right to be told if the information exists and to receive it in a suitable format.

Requests for information

People can make an initial enquiry about information over the telephone, but they must provide a formal request in writing (email is acceptable) outlining exactly what they want. This will help the Trust to respond accurately.

Some people may not directly refer to the Act when requesting information, but their enquiry must still be dealt with according to the legislation.

Requests must include the name and address of the person requesting the information and a description of the information required.

All public requests for information under the Freedom of Information Act should be forwarded to:

Business Support Manager
North East Ambulance
Service NHS Trust
Bernicia House
Goldcrest Way
Newburn Riverside
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE15 9RT
Tel: 0191 430 2000
Email: foi@neas.nhs.uk

The Publication Scheme

NEAS's Publication Scheme is a guide to information we routinely publish. It describes the format in which the information is held, i.e. paper or electronic, and how to get copies. The scheme has been 'live' since 31st October 2003 and is available on the NEAS's website, www.neambulance.nhs.uk or on request.

The scheme's main contents include:

The NHS and how we fit in

- Our position in the NHS
- NEAS structure and organisation

Financial and funding information

- Financial management
- Accounts and budgets
- Commissioning healthcare

Corporate information

- Annual Report
- Trust Board papers
- Business Plan

Aims, targets and achievements

- Finance and performance
- Governance and quality

Our services

- Services for patients
- How we work to improve health

Reports and independent inquiries

- Inspection and review reports

Policies and procedures

- Main policies and procedures including:
 - Human resources
 - Clinical governance
 - Health and safety

Public involvement and consultation

- Involving patients, carers and the public
- Patient survey

Regular publications and information for the public

- Corporate annual report and accounts
- Other annual reports, e.g. public health
- Service information leaflets

Complaints

- How to make a complaint
- Complaints policy

Human resources

- Human resources policies and strategies
- Improving working lives
- Staff survey

Media relations

- News releases and statements

Environmental information

- NEAS's estate and land holdings
- Environmental information, e.g. waste management

The Publication Scheme

- Changes to the scheme and contents
- Explanation of the scheme