

## Requesting and responding to information

Please forward information to the below contact if you have;

- A public request for information under the Freedom of Information Act
- A written request for information has been given to you
- A need for more information about policy and procedures for responding to requests

### The Trust Secretary and FOI Lead

North East Ambulance Service  
NHS Foundation Trust  
Bernicia House  
Goldcrest Way  
Newburn Riverside  
Newcastle upon Tyne  
NE15 8NY

Tel: 0191 430 2001  
Email: [publicrelations@neas.nhs.uk](mailto:publicrelations@neas.nhs.uk)

## Exemptions

There are a range of exemptions covering personal information, security, health and safety, audit, some financial information and individual confidentiality. In addition, if information is accessible to the public already or by other means, NEAS is not obliged to respond.

If any exemption is applied to a request, then NEAS must explain a reason for this.

## Enforcement of the Act

The Freedom of Information Act is enforced by the Information Commissioner, who reports directly to Parliament. If a member of the public thinks that NEAS has failed to respond appropriately to their request for information, they can ask the Information Commissioner to intervene.

Further information is available at [www.information-commissioner.gov.uk](http://www.information-commissioner.gov.uk) or [www.foi.nhs.uk](http://www.foi.nhs.uk)

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North East Ambulance Service   
NHS Foundation Trust

# Freedom of Information Act 2000

## Your right to know

This publication can be made available in other languages, large print, Braille or on CD on request. Please contact the communications department on:

Tel: 0191 430 2099 or via Email: [public relations@neas.nhs.uk](mailto:public relations@neas.nhs.uk)

Further information on NEAS can be found on the website: [www.neas.nhs.uk](http://www.neas.nhs.uk)



## Freedom of Information Act 2000

Since 2005, the Freedom of Information Act has given members of the public a right to access information held by public sector organisations. The Act is aimed at encouraging more openness and transparency in the public sector, and the North East Ambulance Service, NHS Foundation Trust (NEAS) fully supports this aim.

Anybody can ask for 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.

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

## Requests for information

People can make an initial enquiry about information over the telephone but they must provide a formal request in writing (e-mail is acceptable) outlining exactly what they want or alternatively, complete a request via our website ([www.neas.nhs.uk/contact-us/foi-requests.aspx](http://www.neas.nhs.uk/contact-us/foi-requests.aspx)).

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 (can be an e-mail address) of the person requesting the information and a description of the information required.

## The Publication Scheme

NEAS came into being in July 2006 and our Publication Scheme is a complete guide to the information routinely published by us that we make publicly available. It is reviewed at regular intervals to ensure that information about NEAS can be found easily on our website: [www.neas.nhs.uk](http://www.neas.nhs.uk) under 'About us' or on request. The scheme's main contents include:

- 1. Who we are and what we do** (how we fit into the NHS Structure and our organisational structures)
- 2. What we spend and how we spend it** (annual statement of accounts, budgets, expenses, procurement and tendering procedures, etc.)

- 3. What our priorities are and how we are doing** (annual reports and business plans, targets, aims and objectives, service user surveys, etc.)
- 4. How we make decisions** (Board papers, public consultations, etc.)
- 5. Our policies and procedures** (HR, clinical governance, complaints, etc)
- 6. Lists and registers** (contractors and suppliers, asset registers, gifts, etc.)
- 7. The services we offer** (patient advice and guidance, etc.)

## NEAS Staff

Any member of staff could be asked questions by patients and carers, NHS colleagues or suppliers about the service we provide. These tend to be routine and easily answered and clearly, we wouldn't expect them to be put in writing and considered under the Freedom of Information Act.

There may however, be occasions where more complex or detailed information is being sought and which is not immediately to hand. In those cases, it's important that these are referred to the Trust's Freedom of Information Lead

The public has a right to access certain information under the Act and the Trust has an obligation and a duty to make it available and as accessible as it can. We do this by way of our Publication Scheme on our website under "Your right to Information"

If there are questions about the service that you're asked often and you think it would be helpful for us to include that in our Publication Scheme, then please let us know and we will do our best to publicise it

All written requests for information should be passed to the Freedom of Information lead – the clock starts ticking from the day after it's received – so it's important you act quickly.

## Responding to requests

All requests made under the Act must be responded to within 20 working days and all staff receiving requests for information in any form have a responsibility to help NEAS to comply with this. NEAS' official response to all requests will be dealt with by the FOI Lead.

Sometimes, a request will ask for the same information from more than five other organisations. This can be known as a round-robin request. In these circumstances, the NEAS FOI Lead will determine who should be informed of the round-robin request and notify them accordingly.

NEAS is not obliged to comply with 'vexatious' requests or repeated similar request from the same person, other than at reasonable intervals.