

Freedom of Information request 57-18

Request

We are interested in the level of use of private ambulance services (number of occasions, hours/days, staff/crew) and the cost on an annual basis over recent years. I would, therefore, request the following information:

1. On how many occasions has the board used private ambulances in the most recent 12 month period for which you have figures; and for the preceding two 12 month periods - ie over the last three years (please identify for each of these periods)
2. How many hours/days of use does this account for in each of these periods?
3. What level of staffing/crew does this account for in each of these periods?
4. What is the overall cost of the boards use of private ambulances in each of these periods? If possible, can you provide a breakdown of costs including payments to contractors, board admin or management costs and any other costs included in totals?
5. If the board is requesting and/or paying for paramedic cover how do they verify that those attending are state registered paramedics?
6. Some private companies have a minimum hire period irrespective of the ambulance usage. Does the board use private ambulances on that basis? Can you provide information on how many times ambulance usage fell short of the minimum hire period?
7. Does the board have a policy or strategy covering the use of private ambulances. If so can you provide it?

Response

1-4 The Board has incurred the following expenditure on private ambulances. The Board uses one supplier for private ambulances - ABC Ambulance Services Ltd. Private ambulances are used to provide transport for patients.

2014/15 - £81,726
2015/16 - £107,031
2016/17 - £119,494
2017/18 to Jan 18 - £90,484

The expenditure totals reported in this FOI response have been extracted from the National Finance System and as such do not provide the analysis requested in 1)-4). To extract more than this data would require a manual trawl of all paper invoices and the cost of carrying out this work would exceed the limit set in the Fees Regulations of the FOI(S)A 2002 and therefore under Section 12 we are not required to provide.

5. NHS Borders utilise the Scottish Borders Transport Framework issued by SBC/NHS Borders. ABC Ambulance Services Ltd are an approved supplier on this Transport Framework.

As part of the approval process for the Transport Framework, service providers must hold ongoing registration of the National Association of Private Ambulances. Membership requirements for this Association detail the driver requirements for training and experience.

6. The Board does not hire private ambulances on a minimum hire period basis. The Board has an agreed pricing schedule for the services provided by ABC.
7. The NHS Borders specification of requirements of usage was issued as part of the standards and conditions of contract for the Transport Framework. Compliance to the Schedule of requirements can be discussed with the supplier on an adhoc basis as necessary, this would be in addition to any supplier management meetings scheduled by the Board's Procurement Department. These are attached for information:



Borders Transport
Framework - APPEND

If you are not satisfied with the way your request has been handled or the decision given, you may ask NHS Borders to review its actions and the decision. If you would like to request a review please apply in writing to, Freedom of Information Review, NHS Borders, Room 2EC3, Education Centre, Borders General Hospital, Melrose, TD6 9BS or foi.enquiries@borders.scot.nhs.uk.

The request for a review should include your name and address for correspondence, the request for information to which the request relates and the issue which you wish to be reviewed. Please state the reference number **57-18** on this request. Your request should be made within 40 working days from receipt of this letter.

If following this review, you remain dissatisfied with the outcome, you may appeal to the Scottish Information Commissioner and request an investigation of your complaint. Your request to the Scottish Information Commissioner should be in writing (or other permanent form), stating your name and an address for correspondence. You should provide the details of the request and your reasons for dissatisfaction with both the original response by NHS Borders and your reasons for dissatisfaction with the outcome of the internal review. Your application for an investigation by the Scottish Information Commissioner must be made within six months of your receipt of the response with which you are dissatisfied. The address for the Office of the Scottish Information Commissioner is, Office of the Scottish Information Commissioner, Kinburn Castle, Doubledykes Road, St Andrews, Fife.