



Ambulance Headquarters

Bernicia House
The Waterfront
Goldcrest Way
Newburn Riverside
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE15 8NY

Tel: 0191 430 2000
www.neas.nhs.uk

Our Ref: FOI.23.097

Kimrin Pannu

E-mail: request-951305-fcdd8310@whatdotheyknow.com

17 March 2023

Dear Sir

Freedom of Information Act 2000 – Information Request

Thank you for your request for information under the Freedom of Information Act which was received on 20 February 2023. I can confirm that we do not hold the information you have requested. You asked the following questions, reproduced in **bold** below:

Questions for clinical team(s):

1. Of the following, which guidelines does your Trust follow for the diagnosis and treatment of meningitis/encephalitis: (Please answer: Yes/No)

- **NICE Guidelines (CG102) - Bacterial meningitis in under 16s: recognition, diagnosis and management**
- **UK Joint Specialist Societies guideline on the diagnosis and management of acute meningitis and meningococcal sepsis in immunocompetent adults (published 2016)**
- **Association of British Neurologists and British Infection Association National Guidelines – Management of suspected viral encephalitis in adults (published 2011)**
- **Association of British Neurologists and British Paediatric Allergy, Immunology and Infection Group National Guidelines – Management of suspected viral encephalitis in children (published 2011)**

2. Does your Trust have any locally developed/adapted guidelines for the diagnosis and treatment of meningitis/encephalitis in both adults and paediatric patients?

If yes, please state which guidelines have been adapted and please provide a copy of your local guidelines.

3. What are the top 3 roles in your Trust, in order of involvement, that are responsible for the development of local pathways and guidelines for meningitis/encephalitis?

4. Does your Trust typically take samples of blood cultures from patients with suspected meningitis/encephalitis within: (Please select answer)

- **1 hour of admission?**
- **2-4 hours of admission?**
- **4-8 hours of admission?**

• 8> hours of admission?

5. Does your Trust consistently carry out lumbar punctures in patients with no contradictions who have suspected meningitis/encephalitis? (Yes/No)

If yes, who performs the lumbar puncture? (Please specify job role)

6. Does your Trust consistently take cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) samples via lumbar puncture from patients with suspected meningitis/encephalitis within: (Please select answer)

- 1 hour of admission?
- 1-2 hours of admission?
- 2-4 hours of admission?
- 4-8 hours of admission?
- 8-12 hours of admission?
- >12 hours of admission?

7. Does your Trust administer antibiotics to patients where appropriate prior to taking blood culture and CSF samples? (Yes/No)

8. Does your Trust consistently administer antibiotics to patients with suspected meningitis/encephalitis within: (Please select answer)

- 1 hours of admission?
- 2-4 hours of admission?
- 4-8 hours of admission?
- 8> hours of admission?

Questions for lab team(s):

9. Which of the following guidelines does your Trust follow for the microbiological investigation of meningitis/encephalitis: (Please select: Yes/No)

- UK Standards for Microbiology Investigations – Meningoencephalitis (published 2014)
- UK Standards for Microbiology Investigations – Investigation of Cerebrospinal Fluid (published 2017)

10. Does your Trust have any local adaptations or amendments to the two UK Standards for Microbiology Investigations listed in the above question?

If yes, please provide a copy of your local amendments.

11. Following lumbar puncture on a patient with suspected meningitis/encephalitis, how long are the turnaround times from point of receiving specimen to result on the following tests: (Please select answer for each result)

- a) Cell count (<1 hour, 1-2 hours, 2-4 hours or >4 hours)
- b) Gram staining (<1 hour, 1-2 hours, 2-4 hours or >4 hours)
- c) Bacterial culture (<1 hour, 1-2 hours, 2-4 hours or >4 hours)
- d) PCR (<1 hour, 1-2 hours, 2-4 hours or >4 hours)

12. Where does your Trust process CSF samples?

13. Does your Trust perform PCR testing to test samples from patients with suspected meningitis/encephalitis? (Yes/No)

14. If PCR testing is carried out in your Trust, which bacterial and viral pathogens are tested for? (Please separate your answer by bacterial and viral pathogens)

As an ambulance trust we do not hold the information you have requested. However, please find the following Acute and Mental Health Trusts for the North East area covered by the North East

Ambulance Service NHS FT. The hospital addresses are publicly available through their respective websites, and they may hold the information you are seeking.

Northumbria Healthcare NHS FT
Newcastle Upon Tyne Hospitals NHS FT
City Hospitals Sunderland NHS FT
South Tyneside NHS FT
County Durham & Darlington NHS FT
North Tees & Hartlepool Hospitals NHS FT
South Tees Hospitals NHS FT
Tees, Esk & Wear Valleys NHS FT
Northumberland, Tyne & Wear NHS FT
Gateshead Health NHS FT

If you are not satisfied with the information we have provided, you can request an internal review within 40 working days of the date of this letter, which will be carried out by Mr Paul Aitken-Fell, who is the Trust's Lead Consultant Paramedic and is someone not involved with your original request.

If you wish to follow this route, please contact karen.greenacre@neas.nhs.uk who will commence the process on your behalf.

If you remain unhappy with the outcome of the review, you can ultimately complain to:

The Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

Yours sincerely



Mark Cotton
Freedom of Information Lead