



Ambulance Headquarters

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Tel: 0191 430 2000
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Our Ref: FOI.23.160

Dr Minh Alexander

E-mail: [REDACTED]

26 May 2023

Dear Dr Alexander

Freedom of Information Act 2000 – Information Request

Thank you for your request for information under the Freedom of Information Act which was received on 11 April 2023. I can confirm that we hold the information you have requested but can only provide part of the information for the reasons stated. You asked the following questions, reproduced in **bold** below:

Work undertaken for North East Ambulance Service by TheValueCircle LLP

Please disclose:

1) All pieces of work and projects that the trust has commissioned from the company TheValueCircle LLP Company Number OC419158

- a. Well Led Independent Review
- b. Full review of Trusts Governance and Assurance Framework

2) Total spending on TheValueCircle's services and products to date

- a. Well Led Independent Review - £79,253 exc VAT
- b. Full review of Trusts Governance and Assurance Framework - £127,660 exc VAT

3) Which consultants supplied by TheValueCircle have undertaken the work for the trust

Sue Hillyard, Maggie Boyd and David Cockayne

4) Any reports produced by TheValueCircle arising from the work undertaken for the trust

Frankness and candour are essential for good decision-making. We believe that disclosure would be likely to prevent future reviews taking place with an honesty and candour needed to ensure that corrections can be made to improve our services.

We are therefore unable to release this information and apply section 36(2)(b)(i)&(ii) and section 36(2)(c) exemptions. This exemption states that information is exempt information if, in the reasonable opinion of a qualified person, disclosure of the information under the legislation:

(b) would, or would be likely to, inhibit –

(i) the free and frank provision of advice, or

(ii) the free and frank exchange of views for the purposes of deliberation, or

(c) would otherwise prejudice, or would be likely otherwise to prejudice, the effective conduct of public affairs.

The documents requested and subsequently withheld contain the findings and opinions from external reviews that, if made public, would likely inhibit the future frankness and candour that we require to ensure our decisions are robust and informed.

In my reasonable opinion, this would likely damage the quality of advice and deliberation and lead to poorer decision making in the future. It would also inhibit the necessary frankness and candour of our staff if their discussions were made public.

5) Who/ what bodies/ organisations recommended TheValueCircle to the trust? Did NHS England or any of its predecessor bodies suggest that the trust hire TheValueCircle?

The Value Circle was not recommended by another body. Procurement exercise completed for Well Led Independent Review and further work on Governance and Assurance Framework required rapid completion post CQC inspection.

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