

INSERT DATE

Information Rights & Compliance Team  
99 Waverley Road  
St Albans  
Hertfordshire  
AL3 5TL

Tel: 01727 804954  
Email: [Hpft.foi@nhs.net](mailto:Hpft.foi@nhs.net)

Our Ref: FOI/04359

Thank you for your request concerning Private Ambulance Services.

Your request has been considered and processed in accordance with the requirements of the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act 2000.

1. **Please list the private ambulance services you use to transport your patients for the years 2019/20, 2020/21, 2021/22.**
2. **What was the total spend in each of the above years.**

Supplier name	2019/20 £000	2020/21 £000	2021/22 £000
5 Stars Taxis			3
Ace Taxis	14		6
Amber Heath Cars Ltd	3	2	6
Cire Ambulance Service Ltd			56
Gold Line Taxis	1	3	
Mars Secure Transport & Recruitment Service	308	345	550
Secure Care UK			3
Specialist Medical Transport	0		4
VKL Patient Transport Services	205	442	409
<b>Total</b>	<b>531</b>	<b>791</b>	<b>1,037</b>

3. **What is your due diligence process for on boarding a new provider.**

The use of Private Ambulance transport is an area that has grown during the pandemic, in response to an increase in numbers of service users who require transport – either admission from an Emergency Department or the community to a mental health ward; transfer from one mental health to another or supporting discharge.

Should the Trust need to use a new provider, we undertake financial checks; review CQC registration and engage with other local organisations to see whether they are a locally trusted provider. A representative from the organisation discusses use and experience with the provider and there is a regular monitoring of experience and safety. As this is a 'spot purchase' arrangement, if there are any concerns that come up, use of the provider can be suspended immediately.

4. **Specifically, what checks, assurances, inspection or audit did you put in place before using Cire Ambulance Service to assure yourself that the service and staff were appropriately vetted?**

As above, financial checks, a review of CQC registration, recommendation from another local healthcare provider and discussion with the organisation to ensure that they had experience of delivering services for transport of people with a mental health problem and were able to meet the needs of mental health service users.

5. **Where ambulances use handcuffs and similar mechanical restraint, how do you assure yourselves that these are used properly, safely, and with appropriate training in place? What check do you do?**

There are rare circumstances under which soft cuffs are used by the transport providers, which is covered by their own Prevention and Management of Violence and Aggression (PMVA) training. Should cuffs be used by the transport providers, this is documented as an incident and investigated by the Trust. In our experience, the transport provider consistently responds to and participates in the review.

6. **How do you ensure safety and security of patients while they are being transferred.**

HPFT staff are often in attendance during the transport of individual service users, based on the individual's need and risk; in circumstances where this may not be the case, individual service users are assessed for their own safety and that they have capacity to raise concerns, should this happen. In addition, there is a pre and post transport handover which involves the individual service user to receive feedback about their experience

7. **What ongoing governance checks do you have with your private ambulance providers, given that you are entrusting patients to them.**

There are regular meetings with staff from the Acute Pathway and the transport providers to review incidents and any concerns which have arisen either way.

Should you require further clarification, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Please find enclosed an information sheet regarding copyright protection and the Trust's complaints procedure in the event that you are not satisfied with the response.

Yours sincerely

*Sue Smith*

**Sue Smith  
Information Rights Officer**

Enc: Copyright Protection and Complaints Procedure Information Leaflet.

If you would like to complete a short survey in relation to your Freedom of Information request please scan the QR code below or click [here](#).

