

PATIENTS' FORUM

FOR THE LONDON AMBULANCE SERVICE

Garrett Emmerson
Chief Executive
London Ambulance Service

October 14th 2019

Dear Garrett,

FORMAL COMPLAINT REGARDING LAS COMPLIANCE WITH ICO GOOD PRACTICE GUIDANCE

I am writing to make a formal complaint about the management of FOI Act requests by the LAS.

The ICO Good practice suggests the following, but LAS compliance with the guidance is very poor, e.g. requests are not acknowledged.

Authorities may wish to consider the following good practice advice to help them handle requests promptly and efficiently;

- **It may be helpful to provide and publicise a separate email address for FOI requests, although there will still be a duty to deal with requests received anywhere within the authority.**
- **To cover periods of absence, it would be advisable for staff to use the automated out of office facility for emails and to provide alternative contact details.**
- **Where an alternative contact has been provided in an 'out of office message', that contact should advise the original recipient of the action taken in respect of the request.**
- **It would be good practice to acknowledge receipt of requests and to refer to the 20 working day time limit, so that applicants know their request is being dealt with.**

In my experience of submitting FOI Act requests to NHS bodies across the country, including ambulance services, acknowledgements are usually provided within 2 working days.

I have sent FOI Act requests to your automated and email systems, but these have produced no reply or acknowledgement. My first request was submitted on October 8th 2019.

I have also requested a copy of the LAS FOI Act policy and received no reply.

I have raised this issue with Philippa Harding and Lisa Taylor. Lisa responded very quickly and contacted the FOI team, but I have still received no acknowledgement or response from the FOI Act team.

I understand the FOI Act service is run by the LAS legal department with professional external guidance.

Could you please urgently investigate your compliance with the FOI Act 2000 and ICO good practice guidance?

I attach the ICO Time limits guidance regarding compliance with the Freedom of Information Act (Section 10) to assist your investigation.

Yours sincerely

Malcolm Alexander
Chair
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