Request title:
Patient Communication

Further to your Freedom of Information request, the Trust has answered your questions in the order they appear in your request.

Request and reply

Please provide details of the system or process which is currently used by the Trust to communicate with patients by letter, and the organisation or individuals responsible for implementing and maintaining this service.

- o Does the Trust use the services of an external provider for patient and non-patient letters?
  Yes, for Out-Patient clinic appointment letters only which are generated by the Trusts PAS (Patient Administration System) and this would also depend on how the booking clerk/secretaries request the letter to be printed.
- o Please provide details of the Trust's current Letter printing service supplier/system
  Synertec Ltd.

- o Please confirm if you use Hybrid mail and what type?

Hybrid?	Yes	No
Bulk and Desktop?	Yes	No
Bulk only?	Yes	No

- o What are the Trust's annual costs for the printing and postage of patient letters?
  The Trust is not able to provide a definitive figure as patient letters are sent via Synertec and Royal Mail, and the Trusts internal post room does not separately record the number of patient letters that are sent out.
- o Please provide monthly volumes and values for the number of patient letters sent?
  The Trust is not able to provide a definitive figure as patient letters are sent via Synertec and Royal Mail, and the Trusts internal post room does not separately record the number of patient letters that are sent out.

Does the Trust use an **external** printing service for either patient or non-patient letters?

If it does:
- ▪ When was this service implemented and the specialties included?
  October 2011. All specialties for patient appointment letters only depending on how the booking clerk/secretaries request the letter to be printed.

- ▪ Please provide specific details of any aims or targets which were established at the outset and whether these have been achieved?

The primary aims were to (a) replace the ageing enveloping machine; and (b) to implement a solution which allowed formatting of letters that was not available within the current PAS (Patient Administration System) where all outpatient, inpatient and daycase attendance letters are generated. Both of these aims were met successfully.

- Please give an indication of the costs associated with the service, including initial implementation costs and support costs?
  The cost for setting up the letter & map templates was £3.4k. The server software support costs £1.2k per annum.

- How many NHS staff are responsible for the implementing and supporting of this service and what is their role within the Trust?
  There are 3 members of admin support, however, this is only part of their full-time role, to address any issues e.g. unknown postcodes.

- Please provide details of your current letter supplier:

  - Supplier name Synertec Ltd
  - Date contract began and contract end date October 2011 – ongoing. October 2011 was when the RDE first started using the service, but there was no formal contractual arrangement between the RDE and Synertec. This is supported by an SLA agreement and is funded by volume of letters.
  - Contract review date No contractual review date (see above)
  - Cost of contract to date and annual spend As above. It is not possible to give an annual spend as this is determined by the number of letters sent.
  - Cost of set up See above
  - Cost of support See above
  - Fulfillment The Trust is not sure what is meant by this question.
  - Postage – First class?   Second class? Where possible Business Class is used. However, when an address does not match the Royal Mail database, those letters are sent second class. If letter is generated from the Trust within 5 working days of an appointment that letter is sent first class.

- Please provide details of the process which was followed to procure an external print service?
  There was a feasibility study to look at different options followed by a pilot.

- Please provide details of the channels used to publish the notification of procurement, for an external print service?
  Advised by then Procurement Director that no formal procurement channel was necessary.