Dear Requester

Further to our acknowledgement, we are now in a position to provide you with a response to your request for information dated 12 October 2017.

We have dealt with your request in accordance with your ‘right to know’ under section 1(1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (subsequently referred to as FOIA 2000) which entitles you to information ‘held’ by a public authority, unless an appropriate exemption applies.

Teesside University holds some information within the scope of your request.

Request:

1. How many funded places for mental health courses, starting in January for the year 2014, 2015 and 2016?
2. How many funded places were there for mental health nursing in January 2017 (the cohort I am in)?
3. Were there funded places that were not filled.
4. How was the decision made for those starting in September 2017?
5. Why were some people brought forward to January 2017 and how was the decision made for some to be fee paying and some to be funded?
6. How many mixed nursing groups were there in January 2014, 2015 and 2016.
7. How much it costs to for a Mental Health Nurse to be trained in University
8. After August 2016 A level results were released, were there funded places that were not filled due to people not meeting the 240 UCAS point requirement.

Response:

1. Teesside University holds the number of funded places for mental health courses for 2014, 2015, and 2016. We are however, unable to disclose such as s.43(2) of the FOIA 2000 exempts disclosure of information likely to prejudice the commercial interests of the university.

The commercial interest prejudiced is the university’s ability to fairly and successfully compete in the recruitment of students, which is the central business activity upon which its existence is dependent. Student recruitment is a highly competitive market.

As Nursing programmes are commissioned by the Health Education North East (HENE) until September 2018, this contract is currently renegotiated on a year by
year basis. Unpublished place numbers for specific NHS commissioned courses not publicly available is considered to be strategically useful and could be used by the university’s competitors to modify their own commercial strategies.

It is recognised that there is a general public interest in transparency however; this is outweighed by the public interest in ensuring that the university is able to compete fairly in the key commercial activity of student recruitment.

2. The number of funded places for the 2017 entry is held by Teesside University, but is exempt in accordance with s.43(2) of the FOIA 2000 as explained in our response to question one.

3. No, there were no funded places that we’re not filled.

4. Available places are offered to those applicants achieving the strongest overall profile.

5. The decision making process is based on applicants with the strongest overall profile receiving funded places. Applicants brought forward for a fee paying place are also considered based on profile, but are always given the choice on whether to take the fee paying place.

6. The number of mixed groups in 2014, 2015 and 2016 are:

- September 2014 – 4 mixed groups
- January 2015 – 9 mixed groups
- September 2015 – 9 mixed groups
- January 2016 – 9 mixed groups
- September 2016 – 11 mixed groups

7. Whilst the University holds details of the amount it costs to train a Mental Health Nurse, this information is exempt in accordance with s.43(2) of the FOIA 2000. It is considered that public disclosure would be likely to be detrimental to the University's commercial interests as supply such information could reveal market sensitive information to potential competitors. As this programme is still managed and commissioned by Health Education North East until September 2018, there is potential for this contract to be renegotiated therefore, disclosure of such costs would be likely to harm our position in future developments. Although it is recognised that there is a public interest in the transparency of the funding of our courses, it is considered in this instance that the public interest in ensuring that the University is able to compete fairly in the key commercial activity of student recruitment outweighs the public interest in the disclosure of the requested information, particularly where such disclosure would be likely to adversely affect the University's bargaining position during future negotiations.

8. There were no unfilled places on this course following the release of A level results in August 2016.
A copy of Teesside University’s Appeals and Complaints process relevant to Freedom of Information requests is attached.

Yours faithfully
Information Governance Team