

ND ref. FOI/17/212

Freedom of Information

Thank you for your 17/08/17 request for the following information:

1. *(a) Please state the total number of Overseas Patients Not Eligible for Free UK Healthcare who were treated by your Trust but who did not pay their care bill in full and the bill was written off in the 2016/17 financial year?*

Answer: Less than five. In accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 we are unable to provide figures where the number of patients is less than or equal to five and could risk the identification of those patients and breach Caldicott principles.

In these cases less than five is used to indicate that a figure between 1 and 5 is being suppressed. This follows NHS Digital (formerly HSCIC) analysis guidance (2014) which states that small numbers within local authorities, wards, postcode districts, CCG's providers and Trusts may allow identification of patients and should not be published.

Invoices raised in 2016/17 would not be written off in the same financial year.

- (b) What is the total cost of these unpaid bills?*

Answer: £10,064.73

- (c) What was the cost of the biggest single care bill, what department was the care primarily delivered in and what was the nationality of the patient?*

Answer: Due to the low number of overseas patients treated providing this level of information could potentially identify the patient.

2. *(a) In relation to 2016/17 how many Overseas Patients Not Eligible for Free UK Healthcare were treated in the maternity department of your Trust who did not pay their care bill in full?*

Answer: Less than five. In accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 we are unable to provide figures where the number of patients is less than or equal to five and could risk the identification of those patients and breach Caldicott principles.

In these cases less than five is used to indicate that a figure between 1 and 5 is being suppressed. This follows NHS Digital (formerly HSCIC) analysis guidance (2014) which states that small numbers within local authorities, wards, postcode districts, CCG's providers and Trusts may allow identification of patients and should not be published.

- (b) Please state what the value of this care was?*

Answer: £6,053.69

- (c) What was the cost of the biggest single maternity care bill, and what was the nationality of the patient?*

Answer: Providing this information may potentially allow identification of patients.

The Trust is likely to be in breach of the Data Protection Act 1998 should it release details that allow identification of patients. The Trust has a duty to maintain patient confidentiality.

The disclosure of patient's names and identity would breach the first data protection principle and fail to meet any of the relevant conditions set out in Schedule 2 of the Data Protection Act 1998. The First Principle in the DPA requires that disclosure must be fair and lawful, and, in particular, personal data shall not be processed unless at least one of the conditions in Schedule 2 is satisfied. The patients concerned would not have expected their identities to be disclosed in the public domain and so disclosure would not be "fair" in

the manner contemplated by the DPA. Furthermore, disclosure would not satisfy any of the conditions for data processing set out in Schedule 2 of the DPA. In particular, we do not consider that there is a legitimate interest in disclosure in this case. There is no public interest in making information about our patients available in this way contrary to what would have been their legitimate expectation at the time the information was gathered.

The Trust therefore applies an exemption under Section 40(2) - Personal Information of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and section 10 of the Data Protection Act 1998.

3. In relation to the last three financial years please state how many (a) Nigerian, (b) Pakistani and (c) Indian nationals received treatment from your trust but the bill has been unpaid?

Answer: None.

(b) For the three year period what is the value of unpaid bills from people treated by your trust who are (a) Nigerian, (b) Pakistani and (c) Indian nationals.

Answer: Zero. Please see response to Q3 above.