

13 January 2022

Delayed Discharge from Hospital Due to Wait for Community Care Package

Follow-up Question regarding FOI/25999 - In relation to Question 4 (below), can the Trust please advise how I can refine this to enable the trust to consider it.

- 4 The number of people deemed medically fit for discharge but who were unable to do so as there was no community care package who died in hospital, each year since January 2019, broken down by age.

Original Response:

Belfast Trust are unable to provide an answer to Question 4. The reason for this is that it would require a manual exercise to retrieve the data and therefore it would take more than 18 hours.

The Trust considers that the cost of retrieving the information would be above the 'Appropriate Limit', as defined by the Freedom of Information Act under Section 12. Section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act makes provision for public authorities to refuse requests for information where the cost of dealing with them would exceed the appropriate limit. The limit has been specified as £450 for public authorities such as Belfast Trust. This represents the cost of one or more person spending 18 hours in determining whether we hold the information, locating, retrieving and extracting this information.

Follow-up Response:

Belfast Trust's PAS system does not allow us to extract data to be able to provide an answer to Question 4. There are strict definitions/codes from the Health and Social Care Board about how delay in transfer of care information should be entered onto the PAS systems.

If somebody becomes medically unwell, then they are no longer classed as a delayed discharge and the last entry into PAS will be 'unfit for discharge', therefore, we are unable to get the information requested.

I have included a section from the guidance:

2.4 When does a delayed transfer of care cease?

A delayed transfer of care ceases when a patient is discharged. A patient is regarded as being discharged when the person has left the hospital site. **The clock starts when the patient is ready to leave the hospital with the three conditions outlined in Section 2.3 having been met, and should not stop or be restarted until discharge. The exception to this is if the patient becomes medically unwell and not fit to leave the hospital site.** Thus, the clock is continuous, running from the time a delayed transfer of care is declared, through to community screening and discharge without stopping.