

26 January 2022

EEA Entitlement to Free Health Service Treatment

We have been made aware that some EEA nationals have received letters from hospital Trusts in Northern Ireland about their entitlement to free health service treatment. We would like some more information about the number of these letters sent from Belfast Health and Social Care Trust and how recipients were identified.

Please could you, within the limits of the FOIA, provide answers to the following questions, as far as possible?

- 1. How many copies of letters from your Trust requesting evidence of entitlement to free health service treatment have been sent to individuals with an EEA nationality for the following years?**

At the point of issuing the Evidence of Entitlement letter, Belfast Trust are not aware of whether a person is an EEA / Non EEA national and so we are unable to provide numbers just for this category. However, for information, the figures provided below represent the total number of letters issued for the relevant periods requested.

a.	2019	932
b.	2020	651
c.	2021	1,068

- 2. Has the process for demonstrating entitlement to free health service treatment been updated to include the digital status share code for residence status under the EU Settlement Scheme?**

Yes, if someone responds to the letter/questionnaire and states they have a share code we can use this to confirm their current status and eligibility to HSC care.

- 3. Could you send us a copy of the most up to date version of the letter?**

The letters/questionnaires are currently under review and a regional working group has been established to develop and standardise letters and to produce a digital questionnaire that will incorporate all the relevant legislative changes.

A copy of the current letter is attached in a separate document.