

13 May 2024

Treatment of Non-UK Nationals

Under the Freedom of Information Act, I would like to request the following information:

- Please provide the total number of patients treated with a non-British national code (i.e. not White British, Asian British or Black British etc.) for the last three financial years, or the last years for which you have statistics.

Fiscal Year	Total Non UK Patients Treated
2021/2022	536
2022/2023	707
2023/2024	757

- Please also provide the total number of patients treated.

Fiscal Year	Total Patients Treated
2021/2022	275,974
2022/2023	287,912
2023/2024	294,567

Notes:-

Totals are based on Outpatients, Admissions and Daycases in an Acute setting. Totals are for individual patients attending per Fiscal Year (not the count of all appointments/admissions). A patient attending in two or more years will be counted once per that year.

- What is the total amount in charges you have issued for treatment given to non-UK nationals for the last three financial years, or the last three years for which you have statistics.
- What is the amount that you have successfully recovered over the same time period?

Healthcare in the UK is a devolved matter and access to health services in Northern Ireland is provided primarily for the benefit of people who are considered to be Ordinarily Resident in Northern Ireland. A patient who is not Ordinarily Resident is a visitor. In order for a visitor to benefit under the Health and Personal Social Services Provision of Health Care to Persons not Ordinarily Resident Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 and 2019, and in accordance with the Statement of Changes to Immigration Rules (HC 1511) October 2011, as amended, the visitor must satisfy an exemption which identifies patients who may not be chargeable for treatment.

13 May 2024

The associated Trust process applies to all patients, regardless of their nationality (which is not routinely recorded in our patient records), being registered with a GP, having an NHS or Health Care Number, owning property in the UK or having paid national insurance contributions or taxes.

In order to provide the requested information each individual case would need to be examined over the 3-year time period in an attempt to confirm nationality, which may not be stated. This would involve an extensive manual exercise that would by far exceed 18 hours work.

Belfast 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 persons spending 18 hours in determining whether we hold the information, locating, retrieving and extracting this information.