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| File reference | W16FOI625 |
| Key words | Foreign patient who was not entitled to free NHS care |
| Date of release | 05/12/2016 |
| Attachments | No |

Freedom of Information Act Disclosure log - Reply Extract

You asked

In each of the last three financial years (13/14), (14/15) and (15/16) what is the largest bill for the treatment of a foreign patient who was not entitled to free NHS care that you have written off in that you now see no realistic prospect of ever being paid for it.

For each of these three bills please state (i) the amount that has been written off and (ii) the main specialism of care that was provided e.g. (cardiology, orthopaedics, etc) and (iii) the nationality of the patient.

NOTE: This question relates to the financial year that the bill was written off, NOT when the treatment was received.

Our reply

The Trust has a legal obligation to ensure that patients who are not 'ordinarily resident' in the UK are identified, that we assess liability for charges and that we charge those who are liable. The 'ordinarily resident' condition is the key criterion for deciding the chargeable status of a patient. The Trust has a procedure for staff to follow to ensure that the Trust meets its legal obligations.

Whilst this is the case, some overseas patients, not ordinarily resident in the UK and not eligible for free NHS treatment have not paid for the services they received and have an outstanding bill. Outstanding debts from overseas patients are pursued initially by NHS Shared Business Services on our behalf. If their approach proves unsuccessful, the debt is transferred to the Trust's External Debt Facilitators who will continue to pursue repayment of outstanding amounts. At the point it is determined that further efforts to recover will not be cost effective, the debt may be written off. It should be noted that information on outstanding debts is passed to the Home Office who will consider this information if application is made to return to the UK.

The information requested is person specific. We cannot supply person specific information, albeit in a biographical format and without names being mentioned. To better balance, the rights of data subjects and your rights under the Fol Act we have refused to supply the exact bill information, but are supplying it in a banded format. Additionally, we are disclosing the region rather than the nationality. (Please see legal notes below)

| Bill | Amount | Specialism | Region linked to the nationality |
|-------------|---------------------|---------------------|---|
| 2013/14 | £5,000 to £5,500 | Trauma/Orthopaedics | South America |
| 2014/15 | £7,500.00 to £8,000 | Maternity | East Africa |
| 2015/16 | £2,000 to £2,500 | Maternity | Caribbean |

Legal Notes

Plymouth Hospitals NHS Trust is confirming in accordance with section 1 (a) of the Act that it holds the information requested and is supplying it in accordance with section 1(b) unless otherwise specified. We have banded financial information and given an area rather than a nationality, to avoid breaching the first and second Data Protection principles. This is in accordance with section 40.-(2)(a) and (b) by virtue of section 40.-(3)(a)(i), the personal information exemption. Section 16 advice and assistance has been provided by using this approach.