

File reference	W16FOI655
Key words	Overseas maternity patients that did not pay their bill
Date of release	20/01/2017
Attachments	Yes – L3

Freedom of Information Act Disclosure log - Reply Extract

You asked

Please could you provide me with details of any outstanding individual medical bills for foreign patients using maternity services within the trust?

Within this, could you please include the dates that the care was provided and the nationality of the patient?

Please redact the name of the patient if you feel it would breach any laws protecting their identity.

Also, please can you tell me if debts are written off or passed on to debt recovery services after a certain amount of time and how long that is.

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 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. There are no set times associated with these transfers of responsibility, each case is considered on its particular circumstances.

The information requested, including the dates that the care was provided and the nationality of the patient 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 FoI Act we have refused to supply the exact information, but are supplying it in a banded

format. Additionally, we are disclosing the region rather than the nationality. (Please see legal notes below)

The information held by the Trust, applying the above principles, is presented below:

Year	Band of Outstanding Amount	Region linked to nationality
2013/14	£2,000-£2,500	Caribbean
2013/14	£7,500-£8,000	Central Africa
2014/15	£2,000-£2,500	South East Asia
2015/16	£500-£1,000	South America
2015/16	£500-£1,000	Middle East
2015/16	£1,000-£1,500	East Asia
2015/16	£2,500-£3,000	Middle East
2015/16	£3,000-£3,500	North America
2015/16	£11,500-£12,000	South America
2015/16	£2,000-£2,500	Middle East

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.

Attachments included: Yes L3

If I can be of any further assistance to you please do not hesitate to contact me on ☎ 01752 431058.