

Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh Teaching Hospitals

NHS Foundation Trust

Information Governance Department

Suite 9

Buckingham Row

Brick Kiln Lane

Wigan

WN1 1XX

Email: foi@wwl.nhs.uk

Web: www.wwl.nhs.uk

Ref: FOI/2025/10496

Date Received: 4th February 2025

Response Due: 4th March 2025

Date: 4th March 2025

Dear Sir/Madam

With reference to your request for information received on 4th February 2025, I can confirm in accordance with Section 1 (1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 that we do hold part of the information you have requested. A response to each part of your request is provided below.

In your request you asked:

- 1. Please could you state how many patients were treated by your Trust in the last financial year (23/24) who were patients that should have paid for their treatment because they were not entitled to free NHS hospital care?**

16.

- 2. How many of these patients who should have paid for their treatment had**

- a. elective treatment and**

- b. non-elective treatment**

Elective and non-elective treatment is not recorded on the invoices. Therefore, The Trust is unable to provide this data as it is not recorded centrally, if recorded it would be held within individual case notes. As case notes are for the care and treatment of patients, we do not request staff to interrogate them in order to collate the information required to respond to Freedom of Information requests.

- 3. Of those patients who were billed for treatment how many were**

- a. for elective treatment and the bill is still wholly or partly outstanding and what is their cumulative value (the unpaid balance) in total and**

- b. how many were for non-elective treatment and the bill is still wholly or partly outstanding what is their cumulative value (the unpaid balance) in total?**

The information is not recorded to the detail of elective and non-elective treatment. However, 13 of these patients have an outstanding balance remaining, which is currently £94,206.26.

4. Please provide a nationality breakdown of the patients who have unpaid bills against them for treatment in 23/24 showing the number of patients from each country.

Please note the nationalities by patient count are being withheld under section 40(2) (personal information) of the Act. This is because releasing the nationalities would make individual patients identifiable. Section 40(2) is an 'absolute' exemption, and the Trust is not obliged to consider whether the public interest favours disclosing the information.

Section 40(2) exempts personal information from disclosure if that information relates to someone other than the applicant, and if disclosure of the information would, amongst other things, contravene one of the data protection principles in Article 5 of the UK GDPR. In this case, I believe disclosure would contravene the first data protection principle, which provides that personal data must be processed fairly and lawfully.

However, the nationalities of these patients are American, Lithuania, Nigerian, Philippines, Thai and other patients whose nationalities were not known at the time of treatment.

5. Please state the amount of the largest unpaid bill for a chargeable patient for
a. elective and
b. non-elective treatment in the last financial year (2023/24), giving the amount that is due, the speciality or specialities involved in treating those patients, and the patients' country of residence.

The Trusts invoices do not record the speciality the patient was seen under nor their country of residence, therefore, The Trust is unable to provide this data as it is not recorded centrally, if recorded it would be held within individual case notes. As case notes are for the care and treatment of patients, we do not request staff to interrogate them in order to collate the information required to respond to Freedom of Information requests.

However, the largest outstanding bill of the 16 patients mentioned above is £15,344.87.

If you are not entirely satisfied with this response, please do not hesitate to contact the Information Governance Department via the email address provided. If we do not hear from you within 40 days, we will assume that we have been able to accommodate your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Yours sincerely,



Tabitha Gardner
Chief Finance Officer

PLEASE NOTE:

If you are unhappy with the service you have received in relation to your request and wish to make a complaint or request a review of our decision, you should write to: Information Governance Department, Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh NHS Foundation Trust, Suite 9, Buckingham Row, Brick Kiln Lane, Wigan, WN1 1XX.

If you are not content with the outcome of your complaint, you may apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision at:

The Information Commissioner's Office

Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire, SK9 5AF

Helpline number: 0303 123 111