



# 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](mailto:foi@wwl.nhs.uk)

Web: [www.wwl.nhs.uk](http://www.wwl.nhs.uk)

Ref: FOI/2023/9455

Date Received: 7<sup>th</sup> December 2023

Response Due: 9<sup>th</sup> January 2023

Date: 5<sup>th</sup> January 2024

Dear Sir/Madam

With reference to your request for information received on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2023, I can confirm in accordance with Section 1 (1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 that we do hold the information you have requested. A response to each part of your request is provided below.

In your request you asked:

- 1. In the last 5 years, how many patients that have registered in the Accident and Emergency department have left/discharged themselves before being seen by a medical professional for treatment, transfer or discharge? (financial years 2018/19, 2019/20, 2020/21, 2021/22, 2022/23 and up to Q1. 2023/24)**

The answer to question one is being withheld under section 40(2) (personal information) of the Act. This is because releasing the information in this question would make individual patients identifiable in the answers provided in questions two and three.

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.

2. Of those patients, how many left before receiving an initial assessment? (please provide this information broken down by financial years 2018/19, 2019/20, 2020/21, 2021/22, 2022/23 and up to Q1. 2023/24)

3.

Year	Number of patients who left before initial assessment
2018/19	11
2019/20	16
2021/22	<5
2022/23	86
2023/24	16

The Trust has a policy of not releasing information when the data involved is less than 5. This is because we feel that such low numbers could make the individuals involved identifiable and therefore may cause undue harm and distress.

To disclose this information would:

- (a) Contravene the Data Protection Act principles in that it would amount to unfair and possibly unlawful processing, as there was a legitimate expectation by the third parties that this information would remain confidential, and
- (b) Disclosure may cause damage or distress to the individual(s) involved, and that damage or distress would be unwarranted (section 10 of the DPA).

4. Of those patients, how many left after receiving an initial assessment but before seeing a medical professional to determine whether they will need treatment, transfer or discharge? (please provide this information broken down by financial years 2018/19, 2019/20, 2020/21, 2021/22, 2022/23 and up to Q1. 2023/24)

Year	Number of patients who left after initial assessment but being seen
2018/19	47
2019/20	115
2021/22	37
2022/23	422
2023/24	130
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>751</b>

5. On average, how long was a patient waiting to be seen (for either triage or treatment) before leaving/discharging themselves from A+E? (please provide this information broken down by financial years 2018/19, 2019/20, 2020/21, 2021/22, 2022/23 and up to Q1. 2023/24)

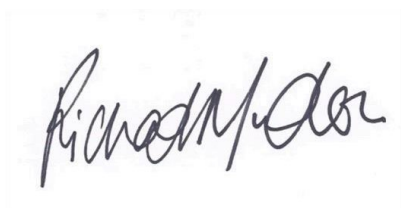
Year	Average patient wait to be seen (minutes)
2018/19	108
2019/20	111
2021/22	202
2022/23	179
2023/24	177

6. What was the longest time a patient was waiting to be seen (for either triage or treatment) before leaving/discharging themselves from A+E? (please provide this information broken down by financial years 2018/19, 2019/20, 2020/21, 2021/22, 2022/23 and up to Q1. 2023/24)

The Trust is unable to answer this question. Some patients do not inform a member of staff before leaving/discharging themselves from A+E, therefore the time indicated on the record is not always accurate.

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,



Richard Mundon  
Director of Strategy and Planning

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