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Request for Information Reference: 07.18.18

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Email only

6 August 2018

Freedom of Information Act 2000 – Request for Information

Thank you for your request for information received on 11 July 2018 in relation to the County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust (Trust). We are dealing with your request under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

You requested information regarding NHS healthcare treatment. Specifically you asked for:

I am requesting the following information under the Freedom of Information Act.

This request is similar (but different in critical respects) as one I sent earlier this year. I apologise for sending this new request; I am sending this new request due to significant inconsistencies in how Trusts understood my previous request, especially regarding patients who had declined treatment. The Trust may aggregate this request with my previous request for section 12 purposes where the Trust provided a response to my earlier request. However, please note that I am not acting in concert with any other party, and my request should not be aggregated with requests sent by any other party.

This request has eight questions. In this request, "NHS healthcare treatment" specifically excludes private patients seeking to use paid-for private services offered by the Trust. It includes non-urgent follow-ups to urgent healthcare treatment.

1. Does the Trust impose upfront charges for non-urgent NHS healthcare treatment to overseas visitors, migrants and former UK residents who are ineligible for free healthcare under government guidelines? If not, please explain why, in the context of those guidelines.

If the answer to question 1 is 'no', the Trust need not provide responses to questions 2-8.

Answer: Yes

2. The number of overseas visitors, migrants and former UK residents who were charged upfront for NHS healthcare treatment by the Trust since October 2017 - please note this includes patients who did not subsequently proceed with the treatment

If the answer to question 2 is 'zero', the Trust need not provide responses to questions 3-8.

Answer: 18

3. The total costs charged for the treatments referred to in question 2 (including where the patient did not proceed with the treatment)

Answer: £19,992.00

4. The number of overseas visitors, migrants and former UK residents who did not proceed with NHS healthcare treatment by the Trust after being quoted an upfront charge (timeframe is since October 2017).

Notes to question 4:

- **Sending an invoice to a patient for an upfront charge counts as quoting an upfront charge**
- **Patients who did not proceed with treatment include those who declined treatment and those who simply did not attend scheduled treatment, as well as any patients who were refused treatment by the Trust**

Answer: 6

5. Of the number of patients provided in response to question 4, please state how many did not attend scheduled treatment/appointment (rather than cancelling in advance)

Note to question 5:

- **If the Trust does not record information in a manner that would enable question 5 to be answered within the section 12 cost limit, please state that the information is 'not held' for this question and process the remainder of this request**

If the Trust has not provided information for question 5, or has responded with 'zero', please proceed to question 7.

Answer: 'Not held'

6. What was the financial loss to the Trust caused by the missed scheduled treatment/appointments referred to in response to question 5?

Note to question 6:

- **If the Trust does not record information in a manner that would enable question 6 to be answered within the section 12 cost limit, please state that the information is 'not held' for this question and process the remainder of this request**

Answer: 'Not held'

7. Any data the Trust holds on the reasons for the refusal/inability of the patients referred in response to question 4 to pay the imposed upfront charges (such as preference to return home for treatment, or inability to meet the cost of treatment)

Answer: 'Not Held'

8. Any data the Trust holds on the conditions the patients referred to in response to question 4 wished to be treated for (this may be provided as categories of healthcare, such as ENT and nephrology), or alternatively the treatments that were subject to the imposed charges (these may be grouped into over-arching categories for data protection reasons.)

Answer:

- Assisted Conception x2
- ENT
- Dermatology
- Ophthalmology
- Cardiology

In line with the Information Commissioner's directive on the disclosure of information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 your request will form part of our disclosure log. Therefore, a version of our response which will protect your anonymity will be posted on the County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust website.

If you have any queries or wish to discuss the information supplied, please do not hesitate to contact me on the above telephone number or at the above address.

If you are unhappy with the way your request for information has been handled, you can request a review by writing to:

The Chief Executive
County Durham & Darlington NHS Foundation Trust
Darlington Memorial Hospital
Hollyhurst Road
Darlington
DL3 6HX

If, you remain dissatisfied with the handling of your request or complaint, you have a right to appeal to the Information Commissioner at:

The Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire

SK9 5AF

Telephone: 0303 123 1113

Website: www.ico.gov.uk.

There is no charge for making an appeal.

Yours sincerely

Joanna Tyrrell
Freedom of Information Officer