

Freedom of Information request 607-18

Request

The below questions relate to overseas/foreign patients as set out in the 'The National Health Service (Charges to Overseas Visitors) (Scotland) Regulations 1989'.

Please break the following down per hospital in your area.

1. The number of patients who were not entitled to free treatment on the health service in 2014/15, 2015/16, 2016/17, 2017/18. Please provide a breakdown of where the patient is originally from.
2. The number of patients with outstanding debt following free treatment in 2014/15, 2015/16, 2016/17, 2017/18.
3. The total outstanding debt as a result of free treatment given to overseas patients in 2014/15, 2015/16, 2016/17, 2017/18.
4. The total portion written off as bad debt in each of the years?
5. The departments most commonly used by overseas visitors? Please provide a breakdown of where the patient is originally from.

Response

1. The table below details the number of patients who were not entitled to free treatment between 2014/15 and 2017/18:

| Financial Year | Country | No. of Patients |
|----------------|--------------|-----------------|
| 2014/15 | Canada | <5 |
| | Chile | <5 |
| | Gambia | <5 |
| | Germany | <5 |
| | Italy | <5 |
| | Netherlands | <5 |
| | South Africa | <5 |
| | USA | <5 |
| 2015/16 | Canada | <5 |
| | Fiji | <5 |
| | South Africa | <5 |
| | Thailand | <5 |
| | USA | <5 |
| 2016/17 | Canada | <5 |
| | France | <5 |
| | Malta | <5 |
| | South Africa | <5 |
| | Turkey | <5 |
| | USA | <5 |
| 2017/18 | Australia | <5 |
| | India | <5 |
| | Nepal | <5 |
| | Poland | <5 |
| | USA | <5 |

2. The table below outlines the number of patients with outstanding debt following treatment between 2014/15 and 2017/18:

| Financial Year | Country | No. of Patients |
|----------------|---------|-----------------|
| 2014/15 | Gambia | <5 |
| 2015/16 | Canada | <5 |
| 2016/17 | Canada | <5 |
| | Malta | <5 |
| | Turkey | <5 |
| | USA | <5 |
| 2017/18 | India | <5 |
| | Poland | <5 |
| | USA | <5 |

3. The table below outlines the total debt still outstanding from each financial year from 2014/15 to 2017/18:

| Financial Year | Total Outstanding |
|----------------|-------------------|
| 2014/15 | £1,760 |
| 2015/16 | £2,553 |
| 2016/17 | £4,708 |
| 2017/18 | £6,778 |

4. None of the outstanding payments have been written off as bad debt.
5. The departments most commonly used by overseas visitors are:
- Accident & Emergency
 - General Medical
 - General Surgical
 - Obstetrics & Gynaecology

To provide a breakdown by nationality would require a manual trawl of archived invoices, review of patient records and reports from Patient Administration System, and the cost of carrying out this work would exceed the limit set in the Fees Regulations of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002, therefore under Section 12 we are not required to provide this information.

Please note that as the numbers of overseas patients receiving treatment are very small, to provide further details could allow individuals to be identified and we would be in breach of the Data Protection Act 2018. We are therefore withholding this information under Section 38(1)(b) of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002. This is also in accordance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics whereby for any number that is less than five, actual numbers and potentially identifiable information is withheld to help maintain patient confidentiality due to potential risk of disclosure. Further information is available in the [ISD Statistical Disclosure Control Protocol](#).

If you are not satisfied with the way your request has been handled or the decision given, you may ask NHS Borders to review its actions and the decision. If you would like to request a review please apply in writing to, Freedom of Information Review, NHS Borders, Room 2EC3, Education Centre, Borders General Hospital, Melrose, TD6 9BS or foi.enquiries@borders.scot.nhs.uk.

The request for a review should include your name and address for correspondence, the request for information to which the request relates and the issue which you wish to be reviewed. Please state the reference number **607-18** on this request. Your request should be made within 40 working days from receipt of this letter.

If following this review, you remain dissatisfied with the outcome, you may appeal to the Scottish Information Commissioner and request an investigation of your complaint. Your request to the Scottish Information Commissioner should be in writing (or other permanent form), stating your name and an address for correspondence. You should provide the details of the request and your reasons for dissatisfaction with both the original response by NHS Borders and your reasons for dissatisfaction with the outcome of the internal review. Your application for an investigation by the Scottish Information Commissioner must be made within

six months of your receipt of the response with which you are dissatisfied. The address for the Office of the Scottish Information Commissioner is, Office of the Scottish Information Commissioner, Kinburn Castle, Doubledykes Road, St Andrews, Fife.