

**Royal Stoke University Hospital**

**Data, Security and Protection**

Newcastle Road  
Stoke-on-Trent  
Staffordshire  
ST4 6QG

Ref: FOIA Reference 2020/21-536

Date: 12<sup>th</sup> March 2021

Email [foi@uhn.nhs.uk](mailto:foi@uhn.nhs.uk)

Dear

I am writing in response to your email dated 21<sup>st</sup> February ( received into our office 22<sup>nd</sup> February) requesting information under the Freedom of Information Act (2000) regarding patients eligible for free NHS care and our FOI response reference 204-2021 sent to you on 14<sup>th</sup> October 2020

You emailed with the following:

*"Thanks for your previous response. Please could you update your responses to questions A1 to A4 in the light of the policies you were in the process of updating"*

On 7<sup>th</sup> March 2021 (received into our office 8<sup>th</sup> March 2021) you emailed the following:

*"Thanks for the response - I appreciate the pressures and understand there may be delays."*

As of 1<sup>st</sup> November 2014 University Hospitals of North Midlands NHS Trust (UHNM) manages two hospital sites – Royal Stoke University Hospital, and County Hospital (Stafford). Therefore the response below is for the two sites combined from that date where appropriate.

**Q1 Please could you provide me with the following information?**

**Copies of current policies relevant to determining which patients may not be exempt from payment of NHS charges and/or are sent requests for proof of eligibility, or a statement of current UHNM policy**

A1 The policy has not yet been updated. Due to EU Exit the guidance being delayed. UHNM will be updating the policy and adding an appendix regarding EU Exit as and when we get new updates and guidance. Therefore this information is exempt under section 22: *Information for future publication*.

We anticipate that this will be available end of June 2021

**Previous response reference 204-2021**

We are currently updating our current policies. We cannot share this policy as it has not yet been approved by Governance Committee. (Section 22 exemptions: *future publication*- expected approval January 2021) however in the interim please see below statement.

- Any patient who does not have an NHS Number within the Trusts internal systems.

- Any patient who has indicated they have not resided within the UK for the previous 12 months.
- Any patient who shows an NHS Number on National Spine with a red banner (Likely Chargeable)

Please see below link to government website for further information:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/864481/Guidance\\_on\\_implementing\\_the\\_overseas\\_visitor\\_charging\\_regulations\\_-\\_Feb\\_2020.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/864481/Guidance_on_implementing_the_overseas_visitor_charging_regulations_-_Feb_2020.pdf)

**Q2 Copies of current policies relevant to communications with patients who may not be exempt from payment of NHS charges, including any proforma letters, or a statement of current UHNM policy**

A2 We are currently updating our process and introducing a new initial letter to patients. We cannot share this letter as it has not yet been approved by Governance Committee. (Section 22 exemptions: *future publication*)

Prior to this process change we used standard Department of health approved letters, please see below link.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/example-letters-to-nhs-visitor-and-migrant-patients>

**Q3 Copies of current policies regarding whether proof of eligibility for free NHS care is requested routinely from all patients or targeted in some way (and if so, how it is targeted), or a statement of current UHNM policy**

A3 As answer 1 however in the interim, general outline for our approach is as follows:

UHNM write to all patients who do not have an NHS Number disclosed within the trusts internal systems, and/or if a patient has indicated they have not resided within the UK for the previous 12 months. Further checks are undertaken against the national spine before writing to a patient.

We also write to all patients who's NHS Number show a Red Banner (Likely Chargeable) within the national spine and also have Home Office correspondence that warrants a letter to be written.

**Q4 Copies of current policies regarding whether information from patients' general practitioners or other data sources (such as NHS Spine or Home Office data) is consulted before sending a request for proof of eligibility, or a statement of current UHNM policy**

A4 As answer 1 however, in the interim the general outline for our approach is as follows:

UHNM write to all patients who do not have an NHS Number disclosed within the trusts internal systems, and/or if a patient has indicated they have not resided within the UK for the previous 12 months. Further checks are undertaken against the national spine before writing to a patient.

We also write to all patients who's NHS Number show a Red Banner (Likely Chargeable) within the national spine and also have Home Office correspondence that warrants a letter to be written.

\*Please note that any individuals identified do not give consent for their personal data to be processed for the purposes of direct marketing.

***UHNM NHS Trust is a public sector body and governed by EU law. FOI requestors should note that any new Trust requirements over the EU threshold will be subject to these regulations and will be advertised for open competition accordingly.***

Where the Trust owns the copyright in information provided, you may re-use the information in line with the conditions set out in the Open Government Licence v3 which is available at <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3/>. Where information was created by third parties, you should contact them directly for permission to re-use the information.

An anonymised copy of this request can be found on the Trust's disclosure log, please note that all requests can be found at the following link: <http://www.uhnm.nhs.uk/aboutus/Statutory-Policies-and-Procedures/Pages/Freedom-of-Information-Disclosure-Log.aspx>

This letter confirms the completion of this request. A log of this request and a copy of this letter will be held by the Trust.

If you have any queries related to the response provided please in the first instance contact my office.

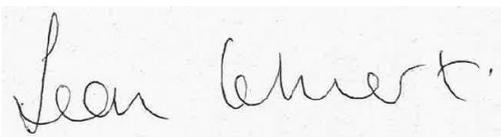
Should you have a complaint about the response or the handling of your request, please also contact my office to request a review of this. If having exhausted the Trust's FOIA complaints process you are still not satisfied, you are entitled to approach the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) and request an assessment of the manner in which the Trust has managed your request.

The Information Commissioner may be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF or via [www.ico.org.uk](http://www.ico.org.uk).

If following review of the responses I can be of any further assistance please contact my secretary on 01782 671612.

Yours,





**University Hospitals  
of North Midlands**  
NHS Trust

Jean Lehnert  
**Data, Security & Protection Manager**

