

Royal Stoke University Hospital

Data, Security and Protection
Newcastle Road
Stoke-on-Trent
Staffordshire
ST4 6QG

Ref: FOIA Reference 2020/21-204

Date: 14th October 2020

Email foi@uhnm.nhs.uk

Dear

I am writing in response to your email dated 28th August 2020 requesting information under the Freedom of Information Act (2000) regarding patients eligible for free NHS care

On 1st September 2020 we contacted you via email as we required the following clarification Q6, is this of all patients or just overseas patients?

On 28th September 2020 you replied via email with the following:

"Thanks for your response. In response to your query: this relates to all patients, including those you may believe to be overseas patients".

As of 1st 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 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

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.

Q5 Total number of patients who have been sent requests for proof of eligibility for free NHS care by UHNM from 1 January 2017 to the end of July 2020 (broken down by the reason for requesting proof if possible)

A5 We do not hold the reason for the request, but please see below number of requests.

1 January 2017 – 31 July 2020 1,556 patients have received a request

Q6 Total number of patients who have received inpatient or outpatient care at UHNM from 1 January 2017 to the end of July 2020

A6 Total number of patients between January 2017 and July 2020 was 618,404

Q7 Total number of patients who have been sent requests for proof of eligibility by UHNM who were current NHS employees, from 1 January 2017 to the end of July 2020

A7 Information not held.

Q8 Copies of reports or summaries of internal or external audits, equality impact assessments or ethnic monitoring ever undertaken at UHNM related to the above policies

A8 As answer 1 however in the interim, we have requested information from the Department of Health regarding the current standard documents we are sending to patients, along with sight of the quality impact assessment and when these standard documents were last reviewed and a date for future review.

All Trust policies have followed the Trusts approval structure.

The policy is due to be updated in March 2021, but a review is currently underway, as we are updating our process with a new initial letter, EU Exit, plus any feedback from the Department of Health we receive.

*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.

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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.

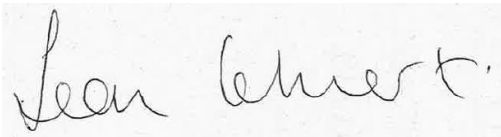
Should you have a complaint about the response or the handling of your request, please also contact my office to request a review of this. If having exhausted the Trust's FOIA complaints process you are still not satisfied, you are entitled to approach the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) and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

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

Yours,



Jean Lehnert
Data, Security & Protection Manager