

Ref: FOI/GS/ID 5274

Please reply to:
FOI Administrator
Trust Management
Maidstone Hospital
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Email: mtw-tr.foiadmin@nhs.net

19 February 2019

Freedom of Information Act 2000

I am writing in response to your request for information made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 in relation to Overseas patients and debt collection agencies.

You asked:

This request specifically excludes money owed by private patients seeking to use paid-for private services offered by the Trust.

1. Has the Trust used private debt collection firms to recoup money owed by overseas visitors, migrants and former UK residents who were charged for NHS healthcare treatment by the Trust?

2. Has the Trust sold debts owed by overseas visitors, migrants and former UK residents - who were charged for NHS healthcare treatment by the Trust - to private debt collection firms?

If the answer to questions 1 and 2 is 'No', the Trust need not process the remainder of this request.

3. Which private debt collection firms has the Trust used for the purposes referred to in question 1?

4. Which private debt collection firms has the Trust sold debts to as per question 2?

5a. The debts of how many overseas visitors, migrants and former UK residents (excluding private patients) did the Trust pass on or sell to private debt collection firms each calendar year for 2016, 2017 and 2018?

5b. Please state the combined debt owed for each year's referrals/sales as per question 5a

6. What value of the debts referred to each year in response to question 5b has been recouped to date?

7. Please provide any information the Trust holds on the conditions the patients referred to in response to question 5a were 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)
8. Please state what policies the Trust operates (or requires debt collection firms to operate) with regard to safeguarding vulnerable individuals when transferring or selling to debt collection firms the debts of overseas visitors, migrants and former UK residents who were charged for NHS healthcare treatment by the Trust*

Trust response:

1. Yes – The Trust only escalates to CPA where the overseas patient provides a UK family address, email address or phone number or provides valid insurance cover details.

2. No

If the answer to questions 1 and 2 is 'No', the Trust need not process the remainder of this request.

3. Credit Protection Association (CPA)

4. Not applicable

5a. One invoice escalated to CPA which was for £30k as it had valid insurance details and this was paid

5b. One amount of £30k

6. £30k

7. Patient was in Intensive Care

8. Not applicable