

Emma Gilmore

Via (e)mail request-465038-cb487023@whatdotheyknow.com

Date: 15th March 2018

Our Ref No: FOI 856 18

Dear Ms Gilmore,

Reference – Freedom of Information Request

Thank you for your request for information. Your request was received by email on 16th February 2018. Your request has been processed under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

I have now had an opportunity to consider your request and I have set out my response below on a point by point basis and in the attached appendix.

Point 1.

Your query read *‘Please provide information held justifying the necessity of persons like this waiting in A and E for an ambulance. (As opposed to their own home or another appropriate place)’*

Response.

The Mental Health (NI) Order 1986 gives police officers the authority to take any person who appears to be mentally disordered, that they find in a public place, to a "place of safety". In the legislation a "place of safety" is identified as a designated hospital; a police station; or another designated facility. All of NI's HSC Trusts have designated their Emergency Departments as their hospital designated places of safety. The decision as to where is the most appropriate place of safety is a matter for the police officer concerned, however they are offered guidance that a police station should only be used as a place of safety if this setting is required to manage risk to the public. The Places of Safety in Northern Ireland are therefore every hospital emergency department; and every police station.

Point 2.

Your query read *'Please provide information on why NI does not have places of safety which the mainland apparently has and any record of any considerations to same.'*

Response.

Once taken to a place of safety the legislation does not allow the person to be moved unless the decision is made that they are required to be detained in hospital under the Mental Health Order (MHO), (at which point admission to a mental health or learning disability ward will be arranged); or the decision is made that the MHO criteria is not met, and the person is released from police custody. Their engagement with health and treatment services at that point is voluntary, the same as for any other patient.

Point 3.

Your query read *'Please provide information on why patients living in Belfast would be going to mental health hospitals in the north coast.'*

Response.

When a mental health bed is required for a detained patient, and there are none available locally, mental health wards elsewhere will provide a bed if they have a vacancy.

Point 4.

Your query read *'How many serious incidents have occurred in a and e depts involving patients who are sectioned and waiting to go to their hospitals.'*

Response.

Further to discussions with colleagues I can advise that the HSCB does not capture information in a format which would allow us to provide a response to this part of your request.

You may wish however to direct this part of your request to the five Health and Social Care Trusts in Northern Ireland, who may be in a position to provide a response, and I have attached contact details at appendix 1 for your convenience.

Point 5.

Your query read *'Do a and e departments have mental health trained nurses working during every shift?'*

Response.

Trusts Mental Health services provide a 24 / 7 urgent care response to ED departments and are generally meeting the 2 hour urgent care response target. There is also a 24 / 7 Approved Social Work service (to assess for detained

admissions) provided in hours by HSC Trusts and out of hours by the Regional Emergency Social Work service, with a one hour target response time. Therefore there are mental health trained nurses and doctors available to the EDs 24 / 7 / 365.

I trust you find this response helpful, however, if you are unhappy with my response, please contact me and I will initiate an internal review into this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Kenneth Moore.

Mr Ken Moore
Information Governance Manager
HSCB
Southern Offices