

21 June 2021

Our ref: FOI/24710

Joan Corrigan

Email: request-760033-5663f6b8@whatdotheyknow.com

Dear Ms Corrigan,

Re: Correct Pay Rates, Care Agency Workers

I refer to your Freedom of Information (FOI) request received on 27 May 2021. Outlined below is Belfast Trust's response, which I hope you find helpful.

Questions:

1. Please outline clearly and concisely without ambiguity, which care agencies have started to charge/invoice your trust at the correct night rate between 6-8am weeknights, given that 3 months have now passed since the letter was received.
2. Please outline clearly which agencies have not started to invoice at the correct rate.
3. If agencies have not and your Trust is aware of the reason why, please outline the reason.
4. Please outline which agencies have submitted requests for back pay and if your Trust will oblige requests for back pay or not and if not, why not.

Response:

Unfortunately, Belfast Trust are unable to respond to your questions, as the information is not held in a format that would allow us to extract the requested information. The Accounts Payable (AP) shared services at the Business Services Organisation (BSO) have provided the explanation outlined below. BSO was established to provide a range of regional business support functions and specialist professional services to the health and social care sector in Northern Ireland.

AP Shared Services who process our Nurse Bank invoices have advised as follows:

To answer this would require an in-depth analysis of paid invoices, which is not an Accounts Payable (AP) function. AP will check unpaid invoices that go out on FPM (Finance Procurement Manager) but not the rates charged, as that is the responsibility of the approver.

In the case of Belfast Trust Nurse Bank invoices, AP staff fulfil the role of approvers and for this group of invoices AP will check the rates charged against the contracted rates. However, once the invoice transitions to payment, the only way it can be retrospectively checked is to see which contracted rate was applied and this would require the image to be checked.

A further hurdle is the range of contracted rates, i.e. there are rates for 00-12 weeks, 13-52 weeks, Year 2, Year 3, Year 4, Year 5, Year 6 and Year 7.

Each of these 8 ranges also contain Mon-Fri Rates, Evenings and Saturday Rates, Sunday Rates, Bank Holiday Rates, Night-time Rates, Overtime Rates and each of these can be impacted by the Banding of the staff member.

Knowing which rate applied, based on the amount paid on an invoice, would unfortunately be an impossible task.

AP can confirm that we have not received any retrospective invoices from any suppliers in relation to a backdated charge.

The Trust considers that the cost of retrieving the information requested would be above the 'Appropriate Limit', as defined by the FOI Act under Section 12. Section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act makes provision for public authorities to refuse requests for information where the cost of dealing with them would exceed the appropriate limit. The limit has been specified as £450 for public authorities such as Belfast Trust. This represents the cost of one or more persons spending 18 hours in determining whether we hold the information, locating, retrieving and extracting this information.

If you are dissatisfied with the way in which we have handled your Freedom of Information (FOI) request you may wish to complain. You should write to: Public Liaison Service, Belfast Health & Social Care Trust, Nore Villa, Knockbracken Health Care Park, Saintfield Road, Belfast BT8 8BH or alternatively e-mail: publicliaison@belfasttrust.hscni.net within two months of the date of this response and your complaint will be considered and a response provided, usually within 20 working days of receipt.

Should you still be dissatisfied with the outcome, you can proceed to the second review stage by contacting the Information Commissioner, The Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, SK9 5AF who will undertake an independent review. It is important to note that if you refer any matter to the Information Commissioner, you will need to show evidence of having gone through the Trust's review process to try to resolve the matter with the Trust in the first instance.

If you require any further information or wish to discuss, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely



Public Liaison Officer