

15th February 2022

Alice Welsh

[Alice Welsh <request-824928-f4d04f98@whatdotheyknow.com>]

Our ref.: FOI/22/031

Dear Ms Welsh

RE: Freedom of Information (FOI) request – EEA entitlement to free health service treatment

We refer to your Freedom of Information request which was received by the Western Health and Social Care Trust on 21st January 2022. Please see below a Trust response to your request.

1. How many copies of letters from your trust requesting evidence of entitlement to free health service treatment have been sent to individuals with an EEA nationality for the following years:

- a. 2019**
- b. 2020**
- c. 2021**

We request evidence from any individual who is not registered with a GP in Northern Ireland and/or does not have a Health & Care (H&C) number. The numbers provided are of those individuals who are not registered with a NI GP/have no H&C. We are unable to determine Country of Origin until we receive a response. We cannot provide the numbers based on nationality as we do not record the nationality of patients and evidence is destroyed in line with General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) guidelines.

The total number of questionnaires issued requesting evidence of entitlement to free healthcare to patients is:

- a. 2019 - 379 questionnaires were sent in 2019, total responses received were 114, 107 of the responses were identified as country of origin EEA. In addition 274 patients were written to requesting European Health Insurance Cards (EHIC's).

- b. 2020 – 279 questionnaires were sent in 2020, total responses received were 74, 67 of these responses were identified as country of origin EEA. In addition 217 patients were written to requesting EHIC's.
- c. 2021 - 279 questionnaires were sent in 2021, total responses received were 65, 58 of these responses were identified as country of origin EEA. In addition 243 patients were written to requesting EHIC's.

2. Has the process for demonstrating entitlement to free health service treatment been updated to include the digital status share code for residence status under the EU Settlement Scheme?

Yes, the process has been updated to include the digital status share code for residence status under the EU Settlement Scheme.

3. Could you send us a copy of the most up to date version of the letter?

Once the questionnaire is returned, any EEA patients are issued with the attached letter regarding the EU Settlement Scheme, sent to patients from EEA countries who are not registered with a NI GP and/or do not have a H&C number .

We hope you find this response helpful.

Yours sincerely

(Not signed – issued by email)

**Freedom of Information Office
Western Health and Social Care Trust**

Enc.

Freedom of Information: If you are unhappy as to how this request has been handled, you have the right to seek a review within the Trust in the first instance. You should write to the FOI Office, Lime Villa, Gransha Park, Clooney Road, Londonderry, BT47 6WJ (foi.request@westerntrust.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.

If, after receiving a response, you remain unhappy, you can refer your complaint to the Information Commissioner at The Information Commissioner's office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF. 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 internal review procedure to try to resolve the matter with the Trust in the first instance.

Freedom of Information (FOI) Office, Western HSC Trust,
Lime Villa, Gransha Park, Clooney Road, Londonderry, BT47 6WJ
e-mail: foi.request@westerntrust.hscni.net