

Joan Corrigan

Via email [request-339115-37868f5a@whatdotheyknow.com](mailto:request-339115-37868f5a@whatdotheyknow.com)

Date: 6<sup>th</sup> July 2016

**Our Ref No: FOI 685 16**

Dear Ms Corrigan,

**Reference – Freedom of Information Request**

Thank you for your request for information. Your request was received by email on 8<sup>th</sup> June 2016. 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 my response is set out below on a point by point basis.

**Point 1.**

Your query reads, *'Please outline how much has been spent on sending patients from NI with at least one diagnosis, (that of a Personality Disorder Diagnosis), away from Northern Ireland to receive treatment in other countries over the past 5 years. Please outline spending year by year.'*

**In response.**

The Health and Social Care Board (HSCB) has a process in place for Northern Ireland patients accessing health care outside Northern Ireland, which is called the Extra Contractual Referral (ECR) process.

This occurs when the HSCB approves a consultant's request to transfer a named patient to a provider outside Northern Ireland for assessment or treatment which the consultant considers necessary but which is not available through HSC facilities. This may be either because the treatment needed is of a specialist nature which is not available in Northern Ireland or because there is a clinical reason why the local service is not appropriate. Due to the very complex needs of individual patients with a diagnosis associated with Personality

Disorder, treatment tends to be better facilitated outside Northern Ireland through the ECR process.

Subsequent to the establishment of the regional Health and Social Care Board on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009, the HSCB introduced a regional system for capturing and recording ECR requests for NHS treatment outside Northern Ireland in 2012.

As such, information relating to the costs of ECRs for patients with a diagnosis associated with Personality Disorder is only readily available from the financial year commencing 2012/13, which I have provided in the table below:

- **Cost of ECRs supported by HSCB for Patients with a Primary Diagnosis of Personality Disorder:**

Year	Cost
FY 2012 - 13	£2,564,464
FY 2013 - 14	£2,578,160
FY 2014 - 15	£2,673,911
FY 2015 - 16	£2,376,258
Total	£10,192,793

**Point 2.**

Your query reads, *‘What specific plans are in place to address the activity of sending patients to other countries for treatment? Please outline all plans with an accompanying time frame.’*

**In response.**

At present there are no plans to change the system of accessing appropriate specialist treatment in the United Kingdom (or elsewhere) on behalf of individual Northern Ireland residents when this is required to meet their clinical needs.

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

Yours sincerely,

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Mr David Johnston  
Information Governance Support Officer  
HSCB – Western Offices