

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST

RF23-754

Request:

Please provide information and break each data set down per year from 2010/11 to present.

1. How many refused asylum seekers hold NHS debt in your Trust?
2. How many female refused asylum seekers hold NHS debt in your Trust?
3. How many female refused asylum seekers hold NHS debt due to accessing maternity care on the NHS in your Trust?
4. What is the total amount of NHS debt refused asylum seekers hold in GBP in your Trust?
5. What is the total amount of NHS debt female refused asylum seekers hold in GBP in your Trust?
6. What is the total amount of NHS debt female refused asylum seekers hold due to accessing maternity care on the NHS in GBP in your Trust?

East Kent Hospitals University NHS Foundation Trust must hold some of this information and must pass this information onto the Home Office because there was a judicial review this summer about a case in which a woman was detained for an NHS debt at the airport on her arrival into the UK (<https://www.bailii.org/ew/cases/EWHC/Admin/2023/1272.html>).

Response:

We can confirm East Kent Hospitals University NHS Foundation Trust (EKHUFT) does not hold the information you have requested.

EKHUFT does not record if a patient is a 'refused' asylum seeker.

The Home Office will inform us if a patient has valid leave to remain in the UK and whether they are chargeable for their treatment or not. They will occasionally contact us stating that a patient was a failed asylum seeker and that the patient had informed the Home Office that they had attended one of our hospitals for treatment. The Home Office would then request that we invoice the patient. However, as above, we do not record if they were a 'refused' asylum seeker.

We then inform the Home Office if a debt is outstanding for over two months through a Home Office portal, but there is not a facility to add a reason as to why the invoice was raised.

Most of the asylum seekers treated by this Trust still have their applications under consideration and are therefore entitled to free NHS hospital treatment (usually having been brought in for treatment by Border Forces).

(DATE OF RESPONSE: 13 DECEMBER 2023)