

FOI REF: 24/438

17th July 2024

Tel: 0300 131 4500
Website: www.esht.nhs.uk

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT

I am responding to your request for information under the Freedom of Information Act. The answers to your specific questions are as follows:

1. Use of Agencies

- a. **Does the trust use agencies to support with permanent/international hires?**

Yes.

- b. **Which agencies do you work with for international recruitment?**

Medacs
Remedium

- c. **Which types of hires do you regularly hire through these partners? (doctors, dentists, nurses, AHP, Non-medical)**

Doctors and AHPs.

- d. **Please provide a breakdown of how many hires you made through these sources in the last 12 months. (doctors, dentists, nurses, AHP, Non-medical)**

Doctors	30
AHPs	18

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- e. **Please provide details about the fees paid to your agency partners, including the lowest fee, highest fee, and average fee. (over the last 12 months)**

Whilst the Trust holds the information requested, it is applying a Section 43(2) exemption in relation to this part of the request as the release of the information is likely to prejudice its commercial interests.

In applying the exemption consideration has been given to the public interest in enabling scrutiny of public sector decision making and the general public interest in accountability and transparency.

We have concluded that by sharing the fees requested could cause harm to the Trust by influencing future tendering processes.

In this instance, we consider that the public interest in withholding the information is greater than the public interest in disclosing the information.

- f. **What was the total spend on permanent international hires over the last 12 months?**

2023/24 Financial year spend £1,749,458

2. Recruitment Practices and Processes

- a. **Do you do any direct internal international recruitment?**

No.

- i. **If yes, what processes does the trust use to find and hire?**

Not applicable.

- ii. **If yes, can you provide an example of the last time you did this, the number of hires you made, and how much it cost you?**

Not applicable.

- iii. **If yes, which countries did you target?**

Not applicable.

- iv. **If yes, what were the challenges of the experience?**

Not applicable.

- b. **How do you assess the qualifications and credentials of international candidates?**

Professional Registration.

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- c. Do you have a minimum requirement for experience for international hires? (doctors, dentists, nurses, AHP, Non-medical)

No.

3. Current and Future Hiring

- a. Do you intend to continue to hire foreign-trained medical professionals?

Yes, doctors.

- b. What percentage of your staff are currently foreign-trained?

We do not hold this information. However, we can confirm that we have recruited 8.5% of Trust staff from abroad.

- c. Would the trust benefit from an international agency with lower fees?

The right of access created by the Freedom of Information Act only applies to recorded information. The opinions requested above are not recorded and we are unable to divulge unrecorded opinions on these matters.

- d. Does the trust have enough of a budget to hire all the staff they need?

Yes, 2023/24 Financial year over spend by £300k.

- e. Do you have a specific budget for international recruitment? If so, how much?

£1,406,000.

- f. What is a breakdown of the open vacancies the trust currently has? (doctors, dentists, nurses, AHP, Non-medical)

Please see the table below for the breakdown of open vacancies within the Trust:

May-24	Vacancy %	Vacancy wtes
Medical and Dental	18.3%	158.4
Nursing and Midwifery Registered	0.7%	16.6
Allied Health Professionals	13.8%	92.7
Other staff	4.2%	179.3

- g. Would the trust hire internationally for these vacancies?

Potentially, yes.

h. Does the trust believe the number of vacancies will increase in the coming years?

No.

i. Do you have any plans to support this?

Not applicable.

4. Recruitment Efficiency and Challenges

a. What is the average time to hire for international positions?

57.3 days.

b. What are the main challenges your trust faces in recruiting international staff?

Volume of quality candidates.

c. What support services do you provide to international staff to help them integrate into the UK and the NHS?

This can include language training, cultural orientation, and professional development.

Pastoral support/Onboarding support/accommodation/Training.

e. What retention strategies does your trust employ for international staff?

Retention Manager/Pastoral support.

f. How do you measure the success of your international recruitment efforts?

Measured against NHS England Pastoral Award criteria - the Trust has gained this recognition.

g. Do you collaborate with any educational institutions or professional bodies to support international recruitment?

Yes.

h. What percentage of your total recruitment budget is allocated to international hiring?

63.4%.

- i. Have you implemented any digital tools or platforms to assist with international recruitment? If so, which ones?**

Yes, Trac.

- j. Are there any upcoming changes in your international recruitment strategy or policies?**

No.

5. Benefits and Support

- a. What benefits do you offer international staff? (including but not limited to: free flights, initial accommodation, visa sponsorship, onboarding programs, test or qualification fees)**

We offer flights/accommodation/visa sponsorship/onboarding/qualification fees.

- b. Who deals primarily with international hires? (person & department)**

Recruitment Manager - Recruitment.

6. Visa and Immigration

- a. What types of visas does the trust sponsor for international hires?**

Skilled worker.

- b. What is the average time taken to process visa applications for international recruits?**

Approximately 3 weeks.

- c. Are there any specific challenges the trust faces in securing visas for international staff?**

No.

- d. Does the trust provide any assistance or support for international hires during the visa application process?**

Yes.

- e. What percentage of international hires face visa rejections or delays, and how does the trust manage these situations?**

None, but close liaison with UK Visas and Immigration.

If I can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

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Should you be dissatisfied with the Trust's response to your request, you have the right to request an internal review. Please write to the Freedom of Information Department (esh-tr.foi@nhs.net), quoting the above reference, within 40 working days. The Trust is not obliged to accept an internal review after this date.

Should you still be dissatisfied with your FOI request, you have the right of complaint to the Information Commissioner at the following address:

The Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire SK9 5AF

Telephone: 0303 123 1113

Yours sincerely

Freedom of Information Department
esh-tr.foi@nhs.net