

FOI REF: 25/902

16th January 2026

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:

Please could you provide me with information for each of the financial years 2024/25, 2023/24, 2022/23, 2021/22, and 2020/21 in relation to overseas patients at your trust:

- 1. How many non-UK residents and overseas national patients were treated by your trust?**

2020/21	1361
2021/22	1705
2022/23	2846
2023/24	3528
2024/25	4880

- 2. How many of the overseas national patients had unpaid medical bills – and what was the total cost outstanding at the end of the financial years stated above?**

Please see the table below for the number of overseas patients that had unpaid medical bills:

Year	Number of Patients	Total Cost
2020/21	71	£219,712.91
2021/22	98	£343,585.28
2022/23	135	£459,855.97
2023/24	181	£494,164.29
2024/25	192	£549,582.09

Cont.../

3. In addition – how much was still unpaid to the trust by March 2025 – in relation to all the years (2020/21, 2021/22, 2022/23, 2023/24, 2024/25)

The total outstanding debt in relation to these years was £535,034.98 as of 31st March 2025:

2020/21	£35,365.09
2021/22	£74,227.70
2022/23	£92,014.04
2023/24	£114,022.32
2024/25	£219,405.83

4. For the unpaid medical bills, what types of medical procedures or operations were carried out?

East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust does not centrally record the information as requested. To enable the Trust to provide this information would require a manual review of each individual patient records which we estimate would take weeks to compile. We are therefore applying Section 12(1) to this part of your request.

Section 12(1) of the Act allows a public authority to refuse to comply with a request for information if the authority estimates that the cost of compliance would exceed the 'appropriate limit', as defined by the Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004 (the Regulations). These state that this cost limit is £450 for public authorities which are not part of central government or the armed forces. The costs are calculated at £25 per hour per person regardless of the rate of pay, which means that the limit will be exceeded if the work involved would exceed 18 hours. The Trust estimates that the cost of complying with this request would significantly exceed the above limit.

5. How many bills have been written off each financial year in relation to overseas nationals and which countries were the patients from?

East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust does not centrally record the number of bills that have been written off. To enable the Trust to provide this information would require a manual review of each individual patient records which we estimate would take weeks to compile. We are therefore applying Section 12(1) to this part of your request, please refer to question 4 above.

However, we can confirm the number of patients and countries where the patients are from as shown below:

2020/21	23 patients America, Canada, Zimbabwe, Australia and Tunisia.
2021/22	32 patients Albania, America, Canada, Chile, Iraq, Italy, Jamaica, Nigeria, Romania, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Tunisia and Zimbabwe.

2022/23	21 patients Albania, America, Brazil, Colombia, Grenada, India, Morocco, Nigeria, Portugal, Slovakia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka and Turkey.
2023/24	10 patients Bangladesh, Trinidad And Tobago, Nigeria, Sri Lanka, America, India, Romania, and Portugal.
2024/25	19 patients Albania, Bermuda, Ecuador, India, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Latvia, Nigeria, Philippines, Poland, Romania, South Africa, Spain and United States.

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

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