FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

REF: 2026-74
Subject: Asylum Seekers Request - 27th January 2026

Dear Sir/Madam,

Thank you for your email dated **DATE** where you requested information about **Asylum Seekers Request - 27th January 2026.**

The information you requested is enclosed.

Question	Answer
1. The total number of patient episodes (e.g., emergency, inpatient, outpatient) recorded in your trust's systems where the patient was flagged as an asylum seeker or exempt from charging due to asylum/refugee status.	When determining a patient eligibility status we use either the National spine if an NHS number is available or we apply to the Home Office of a SVEC 'Status Verification Check'. The National Spine does not always specify a persons' immigration status other than showing a 'Green Banner' which indicates 'valid leave to Enter/Remain. We can only determine whether a patient is an asylum seeker or refugee by applying to the Home Office. Our internal system allows for one category 'Exempt from payment – other', this option is also used for individuals who have paid the immigration health or exempt from paying the charge, there are no sub-categories to allow us to extract the information. **Therefore this information is exempt under Section 12 of the FOI Act 2000.** Fulfilling this request would require a manual review of every patient recorded as exempt from charges in order to determine whether they were an asylum seeker or refugee. Even for a single financial year, this work would significantly exceed the 18 hours of staff time / £450 cost limit set out in the Freedom of Information Act. Once a
2. Total NHS expenditure associated with those episodes, by category where available (e.g., by service type such as A&E, inpatient, outpatient, prescriptions, maternity).	

	cohort of patients had been identified, further substantial time would then be required to extract and calculate the associated costs.
3. Whether your trust records immigration status or charging exemption codes that can distinguish asylum seekers from other charging exemption categories.	Our system allows for one code. This code categorises individuals exempt from charges, patients who have temporary right of abode (paid the immigration health surcharge, short term visas), asylum seekers and failed asylum seekers under section S95.

If you have any queries or concerns please do not hesitate to contact the Freedom of Information Department. It would be helpful to quote the above reference number in any future communication.

If you are unhappy with the service you have received in relation to your request and wish to make a complaint or request a review of our decision, you should write to The Chief Executive, Bolton NHS Foundation Trust, The Royal Bolton Hospital, Minerva Road, Farnworth, Bolton. BL4 0JR.

If you are not content with the outcome of your complaint you may apply directly to the Information Commissioner. Generally the Information Commissioner cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted the complaints procedure provided by Bolton NHS Foundation Trust. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at The Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire. SK9 5AF.

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Yours sincerely,

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