

Dear Sir/Madam

Thank you for your recent Freedom of Information request regarding interpreters.

The Trust can provide the following information

1. In the 2013/14 financial year how much did your trust spend on interpreters so that patients who could not speak English were able to communicate with hospital medical staff?

In 2013/2014 the Trust spent £953,618 on community services and £271,212 on hospital services. It is important to note that the Trust has an in-house bi-lingual health advocacy service divided into two teams working across the hospital and community services. The advocacy model of support assists users of health services who are in an unequal power relationship in their dealing with service providers and health service staff. This is particularly so for people who come from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds and who cannot communicate fluently in English, or those who have a physical, and, or sensory disability. The fundamental emphasis and focus of advocacy is that it sees things from the user's perspective and aims to support the user through their NHS journey and improve the user's health and well-being.

The bi-lingual health advocacy service aims to supply any language requested including British Sign Language (BSL) and meet the needs of services and users as much as is reasonably possible. Where the in-house teams cannot provide the language either because they do not have this language in-house or staff who speak that language are not available then interpreters will be booked from external suppliers. In addition the Trust commissions and monitors telephone interpreting services used by hospital staff and community staff to support them in emergencies or out of hours.

Also the Trust has service level agreements (SLAs) with three local community organisations that provide both bi-lingual advocacy in Turkish and Kurdish, Cantonese and Mandarin as well as advocacy for the physically and sensory disabled on its behalf.

2. How many hospital appointments were booked for patients in the 2013/14 financial year where they needed to have an interpreter?

In the hospital there were 10,396 referrals made to the advocacy service requesting provision of advocacy to support a patient who either had a hospital appointment or was an inpatient needing assistance on a ward.

3. How many hospital appointments were booked for patients in the 2013/14 financial year where they needed to have an interpreter but the patient failed to attend the appointment?

Incorporating hospital and community health services, teaching and research

The hospital advocacy team recorded 761 patient DNAs.

If you have any queries about this response please contact the information governance manager at foi@homerton.nhs.uk , in the first instance. If, following that, you still have any concerns, you may contact the Information Commissioner either by letter, FOI/EIR Complaints resolution, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SM9 5AF, or by email www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk to take them further.

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Yours sincerely

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