

Discharge of Patients with No Fixed Abode

Reference Number: RDF2127-23

Date of Response: 27/12/23

Further to your Freedom of Information Act request, please find the Trust's response(s) below:

Please be aware that the Royal Devon University Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust (Royal Devon) has existed since 1st April 2022 following the integration of the Northern Devon Healthcare NHS Trust (known as Northern Services) and the Royal Devon and Exeter NHS Foundation Trust (known as Eastern Services).

Please find below a Freedom of Information request related to the discharge of patients who may be homeless. Should answering this FOI exceed the time limit, please prioritise Questions 1 and 2a.

1. *How many individuals have been discharged to 'no fixed abode' from hospitals within your trust? Where possible please provide data both by individual medical department and as a whole (for the entire Trust).*

Please provide data for each of the following financial years:

- a. *2022/2023 (or the latest financial year)*
- b. *2017/2018*

If you do not hold data on the number of individuals, please provide the number of discharges there have been to 'no fixed abode'.

Answer: Please see table below. The Trust does hold the information 'by individual medical department'.

	Discharged to no fixed abode
Financial year	Royal Devon
2017/18	29
2022/23	18

- 2a. *Of those individuals who were discharged to 'no fixed abode' (in Q1) how many were readmitted within six months?*

Please provide data for each of the following financial years:

- *2022/2023 (or the latest financial year)*
- *2017/2018*

If you do not hold data on the number of individuals, please provide the number of readmissions.

Answer: Please see table below. In accordance with Section 40 (2) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, we are unable to provide figures where the number of patients is less than or equal to five and could risk the identification of those patients and breach Caldicott principles. In these cases ≤5 is used to indicate that a figure between 1 and 5 is being suppressed.

This follows NHS Digital (formerly HSCIC) analysis guidance (2014) which states that small numbers within local authorities, wards, postcode districts, CCG's providers and Trusts may allow identification of patients and should not be published.

	<i>Of Question 1 – how many patients were readmitted within 6 months</i>
<i>Financial year</i>	<i>Royal Devon</i>
<i>2017/18</i>	≤5
<i>2022/23</i>	Nil

3. ***Does your NHS Trust have guidance/policy in place that details how to support a patient who is being discharged from hospital to 'no fixed abode'?***

Answer: For Royal Devon Northern Services: If a patient informs us they are homeless we would contact the local housing authority on their behalf or signpost them if they preferred to do so themselves. The Trust would provide transport to the housing officer and we can support with housing applications if needed. Housing are generally very responsive and will allocate a worker within 24hrs to provide emergency housing. If the patient chooses to remain homeless and has capacity to do so, we will refer onto our Homeless and Inclusion Health Community Nurse who will support with any health needs the patient has when discharged.

For Royal Devon Eastern Services: We would endeavour never to discharge someone to the street unless that was what they wished and they had the capacity to make that decision. The Trust work with a 'Bay 6' (homeless charity) worker who is dedicated to working with our homeless patients, who liaises with the appropriate council to secure accommodation.

There is information for the wards and departments on the Discharge Directory on the Trust intranet.