

# Freedom of Information Request

Reference Number: EPUT.FOI.19.1050  
Date Received: 23rd April 2019

## Information Requested:

- I would like to know how many patients have absconded/gone missing from mental health wards or failed to return from periods of leave over the last three years, and if possible, the number of days they were absent for.

I would like the information broken down by year from 23rd April 2016 until the time this FOI is answered.

I would prefer to have the information digitally and in excel format if possible.

## Response:

	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20
<b>Total</b>	265	238	324	39

The data in the above table details the number of reported incidents in which detained patients have absconded. Please note this information has been extracted using the 'Abscond' category and the four sub-categories which relate to detained patients (Detained-from Escorted Leave; Detained – from Ground Leave; Detained – from Section 17; Detained – from Ward). These sub-categories are detailed below, however please note the NEPT system did not record the data to this level and has therefore not been broken down further.

	16/17 NEPT)	16/17 (SEPT)	17/18 (EPUT)	18/19 (EPUT)	19/20 (EPUT)
Detained - from Escorted Leave	Not recorded	8	37	41	6
Detained - from Ground Leave	Not recorded	7	11	34	3
Detained - from Ward	Not recorded	63	82	113	10
Detained - from Section 17	Not recorded	46	108	136	20
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>238</b>	<b>324</b>	<b>39</b>

An abscond on the Trusts incident reporting system is defined as any incident in which a patient is absent without leave for any period of time and as such, the numbers above will include incidents in which a patient has returned late from approved leave for any reason. To identify these and the reasons for their late return would involve a manual search through each incident which would exceed the 18 hours permitted. The Trust is therefore applying Section 12 of the Act (where cost of compliance exceeds appropriate limit).\*

In the majority of cases, it would only be 1 patient per incident; however, there will be some which involved multiple patients. To identify this, we would need to trawl manually through each incident, identifying the roles played by each named individual. For this reason, we would need to apply the 18 hour exemption for this additional information. The Trust is therefore applying Section 12 of the Act (where cost of compliance exceeds appropriate limit).\*

\*Exemption: Section 12 (Exemption where cost of compliance exceeds appropriate limit):

(1) Section 1(1) does not oblige a public authority to comply with a request for information if the authority estimates that the cost of complying with the request would exceed the appropriate limit.

(2) Subsection (1) does not exempt the public authority from its obligation to comply with paragraph (a) of section 1(1) unless the estimated cost of complying with that paragraph alone would exceed the appropriate limit.

(3) In subsections (1) and (2) “the appropriate limit” means such amount as may be prescribed, and different amounts may be prescribed in relation to different cases.

(4) The Secretary of State may by regulations provide that, in such circumstances as may be prescribed, where two or more requests for information are made to a public authority—

(a) by one person, or

(b) by different persons who appear to the public authority to be acting in concert or in pursuance of a campaign, the estimated cost of complying with any of the requests is to be taken to be the estimated total cost of complying with all of them.

(5) The Secretary of State may by regulations make provision for the purposes of this section as to the costs to be estimated and as to the manner in which they are to be estimated