

Ref. No: 2056
Date: 16/09/25
Subject: Money spent on legal cases

REQUEST

1.) The amount of money spent by the trust on legal cases (or law firms) defending it against whistleblowers, against claims of workplace discrimination, and defending it in employment disputes in the last five financial years.

Please can the data be broken down by each year for the last five financial years (2020/21, 2021/22, 2022/23, 2023/24, 2024/25).

RESPONSE

1.) The amount of money spent by the trust on legal cases (or law firms) defending it against whistleblowers, against claims of workplace discrimination, and defending it in employment disputes in the last five financial years.

Please can the data be broken down by each year for the last five financial years (2020/21, 2021/22, 2022/23, 2023/24, 2024/25).

Please accept our apologies for this late response but the Trust has been exploring all the ways it could respond in a way that was within the 18 hours' time allowed and has spent many hours to date and following a thorough assessment, we regret to inform you that Mersey and West Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust is unable to comply with your request, as doing so would exceed the cost limit set out under **Section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000**.

Section 12 states that a public authority is not obliged to comply with a request for information if it estimates that the cost of doing so would exceed the **appropriate limit**, which is currently set at **£450** for NHS organisations. This equates to **18 hours of staff time**, calculated at a standard rate of £25 per hour, as defined in the Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004.

In this case, fulfilling your request would require the search of the two legacy trusts and the new legal combined trust, as St Helens and Knowsley Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust and Southport and Ormskirk Hospital NHS Trust became

a single legal entity known as Mersey and West Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust on 1st July 2023.

The information requested is not held in a way that can be easily produced, and a simple report is not able to be produced for the information requested. The costs and invoices between the Trust and the legal representatives are not broken down by individual cases and is a general cost for all aspects of advice and legal duty.

The Trust has estimated that locating, retrieving, and extracting the relevant information would significantly exceed the 18-hour threshold, even with reasonable efforts to narrow the scope.

We are therefore applying Section 12 of the Act and will not be proceeding with the request in its current form.

However, we would be happy to assist you in refining your request to bring it within the cost limit. For example, narrowing the timeframe, specifying departments, or focusing on a specific aspect of the information may help reduce the burden of compliance.

Please let us know if you would like support in revising your request.