

**10<sup>th</sup> January 2022**

**BY EMAIL**

**Our Ref: FOI 1618**

Dear [REDACTED]

Your request for information was received on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2021 and was dealt with under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Please be advised that the Business Services Organisation (BSO) has now completed its search for the information you requested with regards to Veterans Entitlement to Health Costs.

Please find this information below:

The BSO can confirm that a charge is applicable for dental and ophthalmic treatment if a patient is in receipt of a war pension, as this is not a qualifying benefit. However, a veteran who is in receipt of a disability war pension can apply for a refund for their dental and ophthalmic treatment charges.

This refund claim must be made via the war pension scheme and not Health & Social Care Northern Ireland (HSCNI). Normal process would be that the veteran would pay for the treatment charges, be provided with a receipt for payment and then use the receipt to make a claim to the war pensions scheme for reimbursement.

In relation to recovery of health charges, the BSO system only provides information on whether the recovery is for dental or ophthalmic treatment. It does not differentiate the ophthalmic recovery by sight test and glasses/contact lenses.

Therefore we can only provide the following breakdown for recoveries:

	<b>Dental</b>	<b>Ophthalmic</b>	<b>Total</b>
2017/2018	203,785.45	134,820.59	338,606.04
2018/2019	193,867.37	145,517.46	339,384.83



2019/2020	164,377.94	157,363.97	321,741.91
2020/2021	29,354.37	23,577.46	52,931.83
Apr-Nov 21	28,142.30	47,538.59	75,680.89

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<b>Total</b>	619,527.43	508,818.07	1,128,345.50
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Unfortunately the BSO is unable to provide any data in relation to the fixed penalty query as the system we use does not identify people as war veterans. The only time we would be made aware that someone is a war veteran is if the individual informed us or if an organisation such as Beyond the Battlefield informed us.

If we are provided with this information we would recorded it as a case note on the patient's case but it would not recorded anywhere else.

I hope that the information provided assists you. If you are dissatisfied in any way with the handling of your request, you have the right to request a review. You should do this as soon as possible or in any case within two months of the date of issue of this letter.

In the event that you require a review to be undertaken, you can do so by writing to

Information Governance Manager,  
2 Franklin Street,  
Belfast,  
BT2 8DQ

If, following an internal review, carried out by an independent decision making panel, you remain dissatisfied in any way with the handling of the request, you may make a complaint under Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act, to the Information Commissioner's Office and ask that they investigate whether the BSO has complied with the terms of the Freedom of Information Act.

You can contact Information Commissioner at:

**Website:** [www.ico.org.uk](http://www.ico.org.uk)  
**Phone:** 0303 123 1113  
**Email:** [casework@ico.org.uk](mailto:casework@ico.org.uk)  
**Post:** Information Commissioner's Office  
3rd Floor, 14 Cromac Place  
Belfast  
BT7 2JB

In most circumstances the Information Commissioner will not investigate a complaint unless an internal review procedure has been carried out. However the Commissioner has the option to investigate the matter at his discretion.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Karen Bailey".

**Karen Bailey**  
Acting Chief Executive