Chief Executive
2 Franklin Street
BELFAST
BT2 8DQ

Tel: 028 9536 3863
Email: FOI.BSO@hscni.net

13th December 2023

BY EMAIL
[redacted]

Our Ref: FOI 2093

Dear [redacted]

Your request for information was received on 11th December 2023 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 in relation to debts pursued for eyecare and dentistry costs.

Please find this information below:

How many debts the Department of Health has pursued in 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2017 relating to health service eye tests and optical vouchers?

Please could you say how many debts the Department of Health has pursued in 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2017 relating to dental costs?

In terms of claims to exemption/remission from health charges which could not be cleared following our initial checks, the Patient Exemptions Team wrote out to the following number of patients:

Years	Patient No.
2013/14	5,004
2014/15	6,094
2015/16	6,683
2016/17	7,210

Unfortunately, we are unable to provide a breakdown of the above cases between Ophthalmic and Dental treatment charges. Some cases may include both types of treatments.

How many of these cases were referred to the Small Claims Court?

We have referred none of the above cases to the Small Claims Court

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, as the BSO, along with all other public authorities are not obliged to accept internal review requests after this period has lapsed.

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
Phone: 0303 123 1113
Email: 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,



Karen Bailey
Chief Executive