

Dear

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION – ORGAN DONATION

I write in response to your request for information in relation to organ donation in NHS Lothian.

Question:

1. A full copy of the algorithm(s) used to allocate organs in your health board, as described in this BBC article regarding Kidneys: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-30060301#:~:text=Kidneys%20are%20allocated%20to%20individual%20patients%20on%20the%20waiting%20list%20using%20a%20complex%20computer%20algorithm.>

Answer:

NHS Lothian is part of the system used by NHS Blood and Transplant Scotland and does not have a separate algorithm. The NHS Blood and Transplant Scotland allocation policies can be found at the following web links:

Kidney: <https://nhsbtde.blob.core.windows.net/umbraco-assets-corp/31957/pol186.pdf> and <https://nhsbtde.blob.core.windows.net/umbraco-assets-corp/31150/pol274.pdf>

Pancreas: <https://nhsbtde.blob.core.windows.net/umbraco-assets-corp/28334/pol199.pdf>

Liver: <https://nhsbtde.blob.core.windows.net/umbraco-assets-corp/28053/pol196.pdf>

Question:

2. Any documentation you hold, for internal use, relating the function of the aforementioned algorithm (e.g. explaining how to interact with it, how it works, what it prioritises, what its logic is and so on).

Answer:

NHS Lothian does not use any additional documentation.

Question:

3. If transplant recipients are not universally allocated organs by algorithm in your health board, a description of how organs are allocated otherwise.

Answer:

The majority of organs are allocated on a named patient basis. If the organ is allocated to the centre, the on-call transplant surgical team identify the recipient on the basis of need and to ensure appropriate matching they also consider other factors such as blood group, height, weight, age, histocompatibility, surgical complexity and medical complexity, DCD versus DBD donor and CIT. For Islet transplant it is also taken into account whether the patient is listed as a priority in the UK (having had previous islet transplant).

Question:

4. If organs are/have been allocated by committee decision in your health board since January 1st 2023, copies of the minutes of the meetings of those committees since January 1st 2023.

Answer:

Organs are not allocated by committee decision in NHS Lothian.

Question:

5. How many people in your health board received an organ transplant since January 1st 2023.

Answer:

Information is given in the table below:

Organ transplants, 1 January 2023 – 13 March 2024, NHS Lothian	
Transplant type	No. of patients
Kidney patients transplanted from deceased donor	32
Kidney patients transplanted from living donor	18
Liver patients transplanted	13
Pancreas and islet patients transplanted	0

Question:

6. How many people in your health board were removed from an organ transplant waiting list due to death since January 1st 2023.

Answer:

Information is given in the table below. I have not released numbers of 5 or fewer in the table, as this information could lead to the identification of the individuals involved. Since we do not have their consent to release their personal data, the information is exempt under section 38 of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 as to provide it would breach the principles of the Data Protection Act 2018.

Patients removed from organ transplant list due to death, 1 January 2023 – 13 March 2024, NHS Lothian	
Transplant type	No. of patients
Kidney patients	≤5
Liver, pancreas and islet patients	0

I hope the information provided helps with your request.

If you are unhappy with our response to your request, you do have the right to request us to review it. Your request should be made within 40 working days of receipt of this letter, and we will reply within 20 working days of receipt. If our decision is unchanged following a review and you remain dissatisfied with this, you then have the right to make a formal complaint to the Scottish Information Commissioner within 6 months of receipt of our review response. You can do this by using the Scottish Information Commissioner's Office online appeals service at www.itspublicknowledge.info/appeal. If you remain dissatisfied with the Commissioner's response you then have the option to appeal to the Court of Session on a point of law.

If you require a review of our decision to be carried out, please write to the reviewer at the address at the top of this letter. The review will be undertaken by a Reviewer who was not involved in the original decision-making process.

FOI responses (subject to redaction of personal information) may appear on NHS Lothian's Freedom of Information website at: <https://org.nhsllothian.scot/FOI>

Yours sincerely

ALISON MACDONALD
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 Cc: Chief Executive