

Dear

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REVIEW – PATIENT TRANSFER

I write in response to your request for review of NHS Lothian's response to your Freedom of Information request about patient transfers. Having discussed your request and our response of 21 March 2024, I can respond as follows:

Original Request and Response:

- I wish to make a Freedom of Information Request for the number of patients transferred from NHS Highland to NHS Lothian in 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022 & 2023.

Answer:

I am advised that this information is not held in a centrally extractable format. Under the Freedom of Information Act NHS Lothian is not required to create new records to enable it to respond to your enquiry. This information is not collated or held in aggregate form and it would be necessary to review all case files relating to patients over the period you have requested to assemble the information you seek. Even if NHS Lothian did this – and there would be significant cost implications in doing so – it would be unable to respond in full to your request. The information requested is therefore exempt under section 12.1 – Cost.

I am further advised that Public Health Scotland (PHS) who hold information on all health board admissions would be able to provide accurate linkages using complete data.

[Freedom of Information \(FOI\) and Environmental Information Regulation \(EIR\) requests - Contact us - Public Health Scotland](#)

Review Request:

- I request a review on the grounds that many other health boards are able to provide their figures. So surely NHS Lothian should be able to.

Review Response:

I am advised that the Analytical Services Department of NHS Lothian do not hold this information in a centrally extractable format. They can provide information on a patient that is admitted from 'Another Health Board' but they do not have a way to identify the health board without examining individual patient notes.

They do have information on the Health Board of residence, but this is not the same as a transfer from that Health Board and this cross boundary flow information is published at [Acute hospital activity and NHS beds information \(annual\) - Annual – year ending 31 March 2023 - Acute hospital activity and NHS beds information \(annual\) - Publications - Public Health Scotland](#).

I would further suggestion that you contact the Scottish Ambulance Service as they may have the transfer journey logs or that PHS who hold information on all health board admissions would be able to provide accurate linkages using complete data.

If you are not satisfied with this response you still have the right to make a formal complaint to the Scottish Information Commissioner who you can contact at the address below or 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.

Scottish Information Commissioner
Kinburn Castle
Doubledykes Road
St Andrews, Fife
KY16 9DS
Telephone: 01334 464610
Fax: 01334 464611
e-mail: enquiries@itspublicknowledge.info

Yours sincerely

**Freedom of Information Reviewer/
NHS Lothian**
cc: Executive Nurse Director