

Date: 23/05/2024  
Your Ref:  
Our Ref: 8734

Enquiries to : Richard Mutch  
Extension: 35687  
Direct Line: 0131 465 5687  
[loth.freedomofinformation@nhs.scot](mailto:loth.freedomofinformation@nhs.scot)  
[richard.mutch@nhs.scot](mailto:richard.mutch@nhs.scot)

Dear

## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION – PROCUREMENT

I write in response to your request for information in relation to procurement within NHS Lothian.

Question:

1. A description of how your health board's internal supplies procurement system works. By this I mean 'how do your staff order material supplies as part of their job, how are those orders handled, what are they able to order, and how does this vary with rank and position?' I intend here to exclude significant capital items (e.g., beds, machines, surgical tools etc.) and medicines.

Answer:

The Board utilises the Professional Electronic Commerce Online System, (PECOS), which is available to all Scottish Public Sector Bodies under the Scottish Government eCommerce shared license agreement, to automate our purchasing system. The PECOS system is configured with a range of catalogue, non-catalogue and punch out sites providing a range of supplier products and services. Once the requisition is created from either a catalogue or non-catalogue order, financial tracking and order routing is applied and the order is sent for approval aligned with the Boards Scheme of Delegation and Authorised Signatory Database, once approved the requisition is converted to a purchase order and electronically sent to the supplier.

Question:

2. Total expense through the internal system

Answer:

Financial year 2023/24 £672,767,925 – as no timeframe is requested, we have provided the figure for last financial year.

Question:

3. List of products purchased through this internal system, annually, from 2018 to present, with volume and expense on each.

Answer:

This information is available via National Services Scotland, as the data is captured annually in the Spikes Cavell system.

NHS Lothian do not hold the detail 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 finance ledgers relating to purchases 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.

Question:

4. Volume of tissues ordered by your health board, monthly, from January 2018 to present. Please also break this down by facility.

Answer:

We would require further information to establish the type of tissue e.g., facial tissue, lens cleaning tissue, toilet tissue, human tissue etc.

Question:

5. Existing policy and directives for staff in your health board for utilising internal supplies ordering processes.

Answer:

The policy and directives are contained in the Boards Standing Financial Instructions and Scheme of Delegation

Question:

5. Changes to those policies and directives from 2015 to present.

Answer:

According to the Board's Standing Orders, any material changes to both the Scheme of Delegation and the Standing Financial Instructions must be approved by the Board. Dates on which the Board approved changes to both documents since 2015 are listed below:

**Board approved changes to the Scheme of Delegation:**

- 07/12/2016
- 22/12/2017
- 26/06/2018
- 04/12/2019
- 07/04/2021
- 21/06/2023

**Board approved changes to the Standing Financial Instructions:**

- 03/02/2016
- 07/12/2016
- 21/06/2017
- 07/04/2021
- 21/06/2023

Details of the specific changes approved can be ascertained from the public Board papers and minutes, published here: [Board Papers – Lothian NHS Board \(nhslothian.scot\)](https://www.nhs.uk/lothian-nhs-board/board-papers)

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](http://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 FOI Reviewer at the email address at the head 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.nhslothian.scot/FOI/Pages/default.aspx>

Yours sincerely

**ALISON MACDONALD**  
**Executive Director, Nursing, Midwifery and AHPs**  
Cc: Chief Executive