

Date: 02/04/2025  
Our Ref: 9730  
Enquiries to [loth.freedomofinformation@nhs.scot](mailto:loth.freedomofinformation@nhs.scot)

Dear

## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION – EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT

I write in response to your request for information in relation to Emergency Department capacity in NHS Lothian.

Question:

1. For each A&E in the health board, please provide the total bed capacity.

Answer:

Emergency Departments do not have beds, but a combination of cubicles, trolley spaces and seating areas. There are also admission and assessment wards for patients.

Recent work has been done which established that the approximate maximum number of patients we can safely accommodate in each of our Emergency Departments are as follows:

Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh: 80  
St John's Hospital: 35  
Western General Hospital: 25

Question:

2. For each of these A&E, please outline whether the service operated within or beyond capacity and by how much, broken down by month from January 2024 to January 2025.

Answer:

This information is not routinely collected. The number of patients within the department will change on an hourly basis. Capacity is discussed at daily safety huddle updates but is not recorded systematically.

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 <https://www.foi.scot/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**  
**Executive Director of Nursing Midwifery and AHPs**  
Cc: Chief Executive