

Date 04/04/2025
Your Ref
Our Ref 9859

Enquiries to Richard Mutch
Extension 35687
Direct Line 0131 465 5687
loth.freedomofinformation@nhs.scot
richard.mutch@nhs.scot

Dear

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION – AUTISM ASSESSMENT

I write in response to your request for information in relation to autism assessments.

Question:

- I am writing to request information under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 regarding autism assessments within your health board. Specifically, I would like to request the following data:
 - The current average waiting time for an initial autism assessment appointment in your health board area.
 - The number of adult referrals from GPs for an initial autism assessment in 2024, broken down by gender.

Answer:

I am advised that we cannot provide information to answer your request for the reasons below.

It should be noted that the majority of adult patients are not on a specific Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) waiting list, but rather on a non-specific “Neurodevelopmental Assessment” list and without reviewing each patient’s clinical notes, we are unable to say whether these patients are waiting for an ASD, ADHD or other neurodevelopmental assessment.

For children and young people, there are no ASD specific waiting lists. All patients are on non-specific “Neurodevelopmental Assessment” lists. We are therefore unable to provide an accurate figure for wait times to assessment or number of children currently waiting specifically for an ASD assessment.

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

Headquarters
Mainpoint
102 West Port
Edinburgh EH3 9DN

Chair Professor John Connaghan CBE
Chief Executive Professor Caroline Hiscox
*Lothian NHS Board is the common
name of Lothian Health Board*

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 sorry I cannot help further 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 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.nhsllothian.scot/FOI/Pages/default.aspx>

Yours sincerely

ALISON MACDONALD
Executive Director, Nursing
Cc: Chief Executive