

Date 17/04/2025  
Your Ref  
Our Ref 9879

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Dear

## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION – SLT

I write in response to your request for information in relation to speech and language therapy (SLT).

### Question:

- As such, for each financial year from 2019/20 to 2024/25 (most recent):
  - the total number of referrals for speech and language therapy, broken down by a) adult and b) children and young people?
  - both the median and longest wait from referral to an initial appointment/assessment, broken down by a) adult and b) children and young people?
  - both the median and longest wait from referral to starting treatment, broken down by a) adult and b) children and young people?
  - the total number of patients **currently** on a speech and language therapy waiting list, broken down by a) adult and b) children and young people?

### Answer:

The NHS Lothian Adult SLT service does not collate shortest waiting times or operate waiting for treatment waiting lists and therefore cannot answer median waiting time or wait from referral to treatment separately from waiting times for initial appointment.

The service is organised into three large teams: –

- Acute- covering Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh, Western General and St John's Hospital
- Community/ rehabilitation – covering all community and rehab services in Lothian across all H+SC partnerships and Astley Ainslie, Royal Edinburgh Hospital, East Lothian and Midlothian Community Hospitals and
- Adult Learning Disability - covering 7 community learning disability teams across Lothian H+SC partnerships, inpatient and intermediate tier services for people with a learning disability.

## In patient referrals

Year	Total number of referrals
2019/20	2,904
2020/21	2,945
2021/22	3,076
2022/23	3,479
2023/24	3,608
2024/25	3,668

In patients are usually seen within 2 working days.

## Outpatient referrals

Year	Total number of referrals	Longest wait
2019/20	2,749	20-25 weeks
2020/21	2,204	20-25 weeks
2021/22	3,126	25-30 weeks
2022/23	3,402	60-65 weeks
2023/24	3,533	70-75 weeks
2024/25	3,917	80-85 weeks

Note SLT operates priority lists and urgent cases are seen with 2 weeks

Approx 75 % seen within 12 weeks.

Number of cases currently on waiting lists: **552**

## Adult Learning Disability

Year	Total number of referrals	Longest wait
2019	327	Not available
2020	281	125-130 weeks
2021	283	55-60 weeks
2022	269	50-55 weeks
2023	393	40-45 weeks
2024	303	35-40 weeks
2025	84	30-35 weeks

Number of cases currently on waiting lists: 49

Children and Young People	
1.	2019/20 – 2,579 2020/21 – 2,466 2021/22 – 3,172 2022/23 – 3,324 2023/24 – 3,717 2024/25 – 3,913
2.	Longest wait for CPY SLT as at end of March 2025: 10 to 15 weeks. Previous detail not available in a centrally extractable format.
3.	Data not available
4.	420 for CYP SLT as at end of March 2025

To protect the identity of the individuals involved a range of wait times have been provided in the tables above. Since we do not have their consent to release this data from their records, the information is exempt under section 38(1)(b) of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act i.e. to provide it would breach the Data Protection Act (2018).

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**  
 Cc: Chief Executive