

Date 11/04/2025
Your Ref
Our Ref 9907

Enquiries to Richard Mutch
Extension 35687
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Dear

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION – OVERDOSE AND UNDER 18S

I write in response to your request for information in relation to overdoses and under 18s.

Question:

- How many children (aged under 18) have been treated for overdoses at hospitals in your board area involving paracetamol in 2022, 2023, 2024 and 2025 to date? Could this age be presented by year, intent (accidental and deliberate) and by age.

Answer:

Table 1. Patients attending A&E where the main diagnosis code was 'Paracetamol overdose'				
Age at Attendance	2022	2023	2024	2025 to date*
0	5<	5<	5<	0
1	7	5<	6	5<
2	11	12	10	5<
3	11	9	12	5<
4	9	5<	5<	0
5	5<	0	5<	0
6	5<	5<	3	5<
7	5<	5<	0	0
8	5<	5<	0	0
9	5<	0	0	0
10	0	0	5<	0
11	5<	5<	5<	5<
12	20	16	14	5<
13	54	37	32	9
14	79	68	46	5<
15	68	51	49	13

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

16	52	41	37	10
17	47	51	31	7
*2025 data is complete to 03/04/2025 only				

To protect the identity of the individuals involved any figure of 5 or less has not been shown in the table 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).

Question:

2. How many children (aged under 18) have been treated for overdoses at hospitals in your board area involving illicit substances in 2022, 2023, 2024 and 2025 to date? Could this age be presented by year, intent (accidental and deliberate) and by age.

Answer:

I am advised that it is not possible to separate figures for illicit from non-illicit substances. 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.

1. Table one presents patients attending A&E where the main diagnosis code was 'Paracetamol overdose'. Only one code is entered per attendance record, therefore not included in the data are records where the main diagnosis was something other than 'Paracetamol overdose' and yet paracetamol was an additional factor in the attendance.
2. Patients are included once per year and age group. Therefore individual patients may appear more than once in the data, should they have attended across multiple years and/or at different ages.
3. It is not possible to discern intent (accidental/deliberate) from A&E attendance data, therefore this information has not been provided for question 1.
4. It is not possible to discern illicit from non-illicit substances, therefore no information can be provided for question 2.

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. 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