

Date 23/04/2025
Your Ref
Our Ref 9939

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

Dear

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION – ABORTION

I write in response to your request for information in relation to abortion services.

Question:

1. The number of women under the care of this health board who have travelled to England for abortion care from January 1, 2025, to the present date.

Answer:

>0<5 Lothian residents have been authorised for travel to British Pregnancy Advisory Service in England for abortion care between 01.01.25 and 03.04.25. NHS Lothian reports numbers fewer than 5 as >0<5 so as to reduce risk of deductive disclosure.

Question:

2. The gestational age of the pregnancies at the time of travel for abortion care.

Answer:

Given that number of patients is fewer than five we cannot report gestational age for risk of deductive disclosure. NHS Lothian referrals to British Pregnancy Advisory Service in England are for abortions at 20-24 weeks.

Question:

3. The number of women who have died as a result of travelling to England for abortion care.

Answer:

None

Question:

4. The gestation limit for providing abortion care in the health board (not the legal limit but the current care you can provide).

Answer:

20 weeks is the limit in NHS Lothian (Ground C).

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

Question:

5. The number of staff members trained to provide abortion care up to the legal limit.

Answer:

This question is too broad to respond to and to collect this information would require a staff survey. Abortion care encompasses pre-abortion counselling, assessment, provision of medical abortion, and conducting surgical abortion. There are doctors, nurses and midwives in both hospital setting and community (sexual and reproductive health) who provide elements of abortion care. Only doctors can legally provide all elements.

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