

Dear

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION – COMMUNICATION SUPPORT

I write in response to your request for information in relation to communication support in NHS Lothian.

Question:

1. Do you track requests for inclusive communication support in your listed authority? This could include (but is not limited to) requests for communication support for meetings (online or in person) and for static resources, e.g. large print, telephone calls, email/digital correspondence, Easy Read, Braille, Moon, Guide-Communicator support, BSL or Deafblind Manual interpretation or translation, Electronic Note Takers, audio descriptions, captions.

Answer:

We track requests for BSL made to the Interpretation and Translation Service for NHS Lothian. When there is a specific request for Braille this would be noted.

Question:

2. How many requests for inclusive communication support were made to you in 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, and 2024? Data in either a year-by-year breakdown, or as a single figure across 2020-2024 would be helpful; whichever is easiest.

Answer:

We received a total of 11,148 requests for BSL interpreters from 1 Apr 2020 to 31 Mar 2025. The breakdown per year is in the table below. We also fulfilled a total of 23 requests for Deafblind manual interpretation and 279 requests for Qual DBS Guide Communicator support over the period 2020-2024.

Question:

3. How many of those requests for inclusive communication support made to you in 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, and 2024 were fulfilled? Data in either a year-by-year breakdown, or as a single figure across 2020-2024 would be helpful; whichever is easiest.

Answer:

The information for requests for BSL interpreters is detailed in the table below. 2024.

Request for BSL Interpreters, NHS Lothian		
Year	Total number of requests	Requests fulfilled
2020-21	1,352	1,071
2021-22	2,207	1,583
2022-23	2,075	1,605
2023-24	2,388	1,915
2024-25	2,167	1,720

Question:

4. What types of inclusive communication support request were made to you in 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, and 2024? This could include (but is not limited to) requests for large print, telephone calls, email/digital correspondence, Easy Read, Braille, Moon, Guide-Communicator support, BSL or Deafblind Manual interpretation or translation, Electronic Note Takers, audio descriptions, captions. Data in either a year-by-year breakdown, or as a single figure across 2020-2024 would be helpful; whichever is easiest.

Answer:

Only requests for BSL and Deafblind manual interpretation are recorded.

Question:

5. How many complaints did you receive about a lack of inclusive communication in 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, and 2024? Data in either a year-by-year breakdown, or as a single figure across 2020-2024 would be helpful; whichever is easiest.

6. How many complaints about inclusive communication made in 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, and 2024 have been resolved? Data in either a year-by-year breakdown, or as a single figure across 2020-2024 would be helpful; whichever is easiest.

Answer:

I am advised that this information is not collected centrally. There is no category for 'inclusive communication' under which complaints are recorded. A free text search of all complaints records with the term 'inclusive communication' did not show any results. A free text search with the term 'communication' showed over 1,000 results. In order to determine which of these were related to inclusive communication it would be necessary to review each record individually, requiring significant resources. Under section 12 of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002, NHS Lothian is not required to respond to your request if the resources required to do so equate to more than £600 in cost.

Question:

7. Do you offer your staff training on inclusive communication?

8. If you provide staff with training on inclusive communication, is this training open to all staff or to selected groups?

Answer:

We signpost staff to available training, but do not carry this out in house.

Question:

9. What percentage of your staff accessed inclusive communication training in 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, and 2024? Data in either a year-by-year breakdown, or as a single figure would be helpful; whichever is easiest.

Answer:

This information is not held centrally as NHS Lothian does not carry out this training in house. Information may be held in individual staff records, but in order to provide the information you request it would be necessary to review each staff record over the period you have specified, requiring significant resources. Under section 12 of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002, NHS Lothian is not required to respond to your request if the resources required to do so equate to more than £600 in cost.

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
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Cc: Chief Executive