

Dear

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION – EMERGENCY MENTAL HEALTH WAITS

I write in response to your request for information in relation to the waiting time for emergency admission to mental health beds in NHS Lothian.

Question:

1. How many patients presented at your A&E departments with mental ill health (psychiatric, psychological, and/or behavioural disturbances/changes) as the primary issue each year between and including 2019 to 2025? Please include data up to the end of February 2025.

Answer:

The table below details the information you have requested. These numbers include presentations due to drug and alcohol issues.

Presentations to Emergency Departments with mental ill health as the primary issue, NHS Lothian	
Year	Number of presentations
2019	13,983
2020	12,309
2021	12,775
2022	12,499
2023	13,140
2024	11,225
2025 (to 28 February)	2,659

Question:

2. How many patients identified in question 1 waited more than 12 hours for transfer to a bed in a mental health unit after a decision to admit? Please provide year by year data between and including 2019 to 2025, and include data up to the end of February 2025.

Answer:

The table below details the number of patients who waited over 12 hours from arriving at the Emergency Department to admission to an inpatient mental health bed. We are not able to report on the time from the decision to admit the patient, as this information is not collected centrally.

I have not released numbers of 5 or fewer in the table, as this information could lead to the identification of the individuals involved. Since we do not have their consent to release their personal data, the information is exempt under section 38 of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 as to provide it would breach the principles of the Data Protection Act 2018.

Patients waiting over 12 hours for admission to mental health beds from Emergency Departments, NHS Lothian	
Year	Number of patients
2019	≤5
2020	≤5
2021	7
2022	24
2023	14
2024	65
2025 (to 28 February)	35

Question:

3. How many incidents of physical violence carried out towards staff by all patients were reported each year between and including 2019 to 2025 in your A+E departments? Please include data up to the end of February 2025.

Answer:

The table below details the number of incidents recorded. I have not released numbers of 5 or fewer in the table, as this information could lead to the identification of the individuals involved. Since we do not have their consent to release their personal data, the information is exempt under section 38 of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 as to provide it would breach the principles of the Data Protection Act 2018.

Incidents recorded of physical violence by patients towards staff in Emergency Departments, NHS Lothian			
Year	No known adverse effect at this time	Harm to a person – minor	Harm to a person - moderate
2019	14	9	≤5
2020	7	11	≤5
2021	8	13	0
2022	12	23	≤5
2023	10	16	≤5
2024	16	16	≤5
2025 (to 28 February)	≤5	≤5	0

The level of harm definitions used are as follows:

- Harm to a person – minor: minor injury or illness, first aid treatment possibly required.
- Harm to a person – moderate: significant injury requiring medical treatment and / or counselling, short term effects.

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