

Date 30/04/2025
Your Ref
Our Ref 9932

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

Dear

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION – ERECTILE DYSFUNCTION

I write in response to your request for information in relation to erectile dysfunction.

Question:

- Of all referrals made to prescribe medication for erectile dysfunction due to severe distress ;
 - 1 How many referrals were made in 2019 and 2024?
 - 2 In each year how many requests were declined?
 3. How much does the service cost NHS Lothian annually?

Answer:

I am advised that the Urology service does not select these patients. Any referrals that come to the service are forwarded on. Please see attached proforma and info.

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.

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

Headquarters
Mainpoint
102 West Port
Edinburgh EH3 9DN

Chair Professor John Connaghan CBE
Chief Executive Professor Caroline Hiscox
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name of Lothian Health Board*

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
Enc.

Date: 3 May 2011

Email: EDclinic@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk.

Dear Colleagues

We are writing to inform you about a new referral pathway for men with severe distress relating to erectile dysfunction (ED) who wish to be considered for ongoing treatment on the NHS.

The Scottish Government has recently changed the regulations in relation to the prescribing of ED treatments on the NHS. This means that, after an initial assessment by a specialist service to confirm severe distress, treatments for ED may be prescribed in primary care on an NHS prescription marked "SLS".

It is not considered necessary for this specialist assessment to be face to face and it may be based on information provided by the referrer.

We have therefore devised a referral pro-forma that can be completed for a patient and sent to a secure email address. The proforma may be copied and pasted into the email or sent as an attachment to the email (ED@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk). You may set it up as a template within your clinical system.

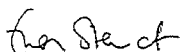
If the necessary criteria are met you will receive a reply authorising you to issue ongoing NHS prescriptions for ED treatment on the grounds of severe distress. These may be for 5-phosphodiesterase inhibitors, such as Viagra, or other treatments you feel are clinically indicated.

This service is solely designed to assess a patient's eligibility for NHS treatment and such assessment may be required even in patients who have contra-indications for ED therapy or in whom previous treatment has failed. If required, these patients may also be referred either to Urology (using the Erectile Dysfunction protocol) or to the Sexual Problems clinic at the Royal Infirmary for assessment and recommendations on alternative treatments.

RefHelp has advice and guidance on the assessment of patients with erectile dysfunction in primary care.

Please make sure that you supply your contact details, including a regularly used secure email address, on the pro-forma to ensure that you receive a prompt reply. If you wish to further discuss a patient's eligibility for prescribing *under the severe distress category*, please indicate that you wish a telephone call from the specialist and give a number for them to call you on. This should not be used for clinical queries relating to the appropriateness of a particular therapy for an individual – please refer these to Urology or the Sexual Problems clinic.

Yours sincerely



Dr. Ewen Stewart
On behalf of Lothian Sexual & Reproductive Health Service



Headquarters
Waverley Gate, 2-4 Waterloo Place, Edinburgh EH1 3EG

Chair Dr Charles J Winstanley
Chief Executive Professor James J Barbour O.B.E.
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Erectile Dysfunction – SEVERE DISTRESS

Please complete BOTH pages and email this form to EDclinic@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk

Protocol Text	
Patient Name	
Patient date of birth	
CHI	
Patient Address	
GP /Referrer	
Reference number:	
Practice Name & Address	
Practice telephone number:	
Secure email address for reply;	

This referral service is for men who may suffer from *severe distress as a result of erectile dysfunction* and who may benefit from 5 phosphodiesterase drugs or other treatments to help this. Scottish Government regulations now allow GP *SLS* prescriptions for these drugs after a specialist opinion to confirm eligibility due to severe distress.

If the criteria for severe distress in this protocol are met you will receive a reply confirming that the patient is eligible for NHS *SLS* prescriptions for erectile dysfunction treatments . This is NOT an opinion on the suitability of the patient for 5phosphodiesterase drugs (the usual first line medication). The responsibility for appropriate assessment and prescribing remains with the prescriber of the medication.

RefHelp has advice and guidance on the assessment of patients with erectile dysfunction in primary care.

If you wish to further discuss a patient's eligibility for prescribing *under the severe distress category* please indicate that you wish a telephone call from the specialist and give a number for them to call you on.

This service is designed to assess a patient's eligibility for NHS treatment and such assessment may be required even in patients who have contra-indications for 5 phosphodiesterase therapy or in whom previous treatment has failed. These patients should also be referred either to Urology (using the Erectile Dysfunction protocol) or to the Sexual Problems clinic at the Royal Infirmary for assessment and recommendations on alternative treatments.

	Yes/No
Does this man's erectile dysfunction have: a) a marked negative effect on his mood or behaviour? OR b) a marked negative effect on his interpersonal relationships?	
Do these effects cause significant disruption to normal life activities?	
Does this man, in your opinion, suffer from severe mental distress as a result of his erectile dysfunction?	
I wish to speak to the specialist about this patient's eligibility for NHS prescriptions under the severe distress category Telephone number:	