

Date 05/05/2025
Your Ref
Our Ref 10038

Enquiries to Richard Mutch
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Dear

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION – EQUIPMENT

I write in response to your request for information in relation to equipment.

Question:

- I am contacting you on behalf of **Youth MedAid London** as part of an initiative to explore and assess **sustainable practices within NHS trusts**. Our focus includes understanding procurement, inventory management, and disposal practices for medical equipment, with particular attention to environmental impact and sustainability efforts. We aim to compile this information for analysis and to promote awareness of sustainable healthcare practices.

Please find the details of our request below. We have provided structured response options where applicable to ensure consistency and ease of analysis.

For this request, "medical equipment" includes reusable or single-use tools, devices, or machinery used for patient care, diagnosis, treatment, or monitoring (e.g., surgical instruments, diagnostic devices, monitoring equipment, and imaging machines).

Answer:

SECTION 1: Hospital Demographics I assume someone else will complete this section?

1. Please indicate your trust/hospital type and type of care:

1. Trust/Hospital Type:

1. Acute - Yes
2. Mental Health - yes
3. Community - yes
4. Ambulance - no
5. Other (please specify)

2. Type of Care:

- i) Secondary - yes
- ii) Tertiary - yes

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

iii) Other (please specify)

3. **Total Number of Beds:** Please indicate the total number of inpatient beds in your hospital, including all types (e.g., general, ICU, maternity) if applicable.
4. **ICU/ITU Bed Count:** How many beds are designated for intensive or high-dependency care?
5. **Annual Admissions:** Please provide the total number of patient admissions in the last calendar year. If exact figures are unavailable, please provide your best estimate.

Information requested is available via the following:-

<https://www.opendata.nhs.scot/dataset/hospital-beds-information>

This information is exempt under Section 25 of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 - Information otherwise accessible

(1) Information which the applicant can reasonably obtain other than by requesting it under section 1(1) is exempt information.

SECTION 2: Procurement and Inventory Management In part you need to refer to procurement.

Formal Procurement Policies: Does your hospital have formal policies or guidelines for medical equipment procurement?

1. Yes (please provide a copy or summary) **Yes, we have a process for this, but we're unable to provide it because the documentation is currently in draft form.**
2. No
3. **Designated Procurement Roles:** Is there a designated individual or team responsible for managing the procurement of medical equipment? **If yes**, please provide the role(s) and a brief description of responsibilities.

This question is open to interpretation and depends on the intent behind “*managing the procurement of medical equipment*”. We have a team in procurement that raise the purchase orders. The decision of what to buy is handled jointly by clinical teams and scientific/technical staff working collaboratively together to agree on the optimum device(s). The composition of the group working on selection and prioritisation depends on the nature of the medical equipment in question. Funding aspects are handled via a different group of people in Finance.

1. Yes – Individual
2. Yes – Team
3. No

3. **Inventory Review Frequency:** How often is your medical equipment inventory reviewed for excess or unused items?
1. Monthly
 2. Quarterly
 3. Biannually
 4. Annually
 5. Other (please specify) **This is a continuous process initiated any time we either need to: dispose of a device at the end of life, plan for replacement of devices, or perform a review as part of general service improvement and efficiency saving work. Consequently, this is a constant task for Clinical Engineering.**

4. **Primary Sources for Procurement:**

What are the primary sources for your medical equipment procurement?

Please indicate the proportion sourced from the NHS supply chain versus individual suppliers, and provide any additional details as applicable. **This question is England-centric. Our purchases are a mixture of: (i) Via NHS Scotland National Procurement, (ii) Direct from Manufacturers, and on rarer occasions (iii) From NHS England Supply Chain. To calculate percentages would be too resource intensive as this information is not held in a searchable format.**

SECTION 3: Waste and Disposal

1. **Excess/Expired Equipment:**

What percentage of your medical equipment inventory was classified as excess, unused, or expired in the last 12 months? **There is no clear definition in the Clinical Engineering community in the UK for the terms “excess”, “unused” or “expired” therefore we cannot provide figures for this request. The only devices that the Board has disposed-of in the past 12 months are either beyond economic repair or end of service life (no longer supported by the manufacturer).**

Please provide a breakdown by equipment type, if available.

2. **Disposal Responsibility:** Is there a specific role or department responsible for overseeing the disposal of medical equipment? **If yes**, please provide the role(s) and responsibilities.
1. Yes – Individual
 2. Yes – Department **Largely this is the responsibility of Medical Physics, although some other scientific/technical departments hold responsibility for some specific equipment.**
 3. No
3. **Formal Disposal Policy:** Does your hospital have a formal policy for the disposal of medical equipment?
1. Yes (please provide a copy or summary of any policies) **There is a draft process which requires the route of disposal to be considered. The default position is equipment is sent to auction unless it is non-functional, in which case it is disposed of through a**

WEEE stream. Items are on occasion donated to other countries via the Scottish Government's Global Citizenship programme when there is a specific call for equipment that the Board is planning to dispose of. Most recently equipment was sent to Ukraine via this route.

2. No
4. **Types of Commonly Disposed Equipment:** Please specify the types of medical equipment most commonly disposed of due to expiry or non-use. Include examples and approximate percentages for each type, if possible.
 1. Surgical instruments **This will require input from HSDU/theatres.**
 2. Diagnostic devices **Yes – when end of life**
 3. Monitoring equipment **Yes – when end of life**
 4. Imaging equipment **Yes – when end of life**
 5. Other (please specify)

SECTION 4: Sustainability and Environmental Impact

1. **Sustainability Initiatives:** Does your hospital have a sustainability initiative for recycling, reuse, or redistribution of excess or unused medical equipment?
 1. Yes (please provide details) **The process described in section 3.3 above is in line with the Board's policy on sustainability.**
 2. No
2. **Disposal of Excess or Expired Equipment:** How does your hospital manage the disposal of excess, expired, or damaged equipment? Please provide a breakdown by disposal method and indicate the approximate amount (in tonnes) used per year for each method. **Quantitative figures are not available. Equipment is not considered as a waste stream measured by mass, we count the number of devices.**
 1. Recycling **Via a WEEE waste stream. Around 10% of equipment by device count.**
 2. Donation
 3. General waste
 4. Other (please specify) **Auction. Around 90% of equipment by device count.**

SECTION 5: Policies and Compliance

1. **Compliance with Disposal Guidelines:** How does your hospital ensure compliance with national or NHS guidelines on the disposal and management of medical equipment?
 1. Internal audits **Services perform audits of compliance with “[Managing Medical Devices](#), section 10”.**
 2. External audits
 3. Regular staff training
 4. Other (please specify)
2. **Internal Audits of Equipment Management:** Has your hospital conducted internal audits within the last 12 months to assess the management of excess medical equipment?

1. Yes (**If yes**, please indicate the frequency of audits and any key findings, if available) **See question 2.3. This is a continuous process.**
2. No

I hope the information provided helps with your request. I am sorry I cannot help 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