

Dear

## **FREEDOM OF INFORMATION – GIANT CELL ARTERITIS TREATMENT**

I write in response to your request for information in relation to giant cell arteritis treatment in NHS Lothian.

Question:

1. Does your trust or health board treat giant cell arteritis (GCA)? If not, please provide the name of the hospital or trust that you refer GCA patients to.

Answer:

Yes, NHS Lothian provides this treatment.

Question:

2. In the past 3 months, how many patients with a primary diagnosis of GCA (ICD10 codes M31.5 or M31.6) were: a) Admitted as an inpatient; b) Treated in A&E

Answer:

Clinical coding takes place after the discharge of the patient and there is a lag time before this will be completed. We are therefore not able to provide data on the number of patients admitted as an inpatient in the last 3 months with a primary diagnosis of giant cell arteritis. In the period October to December 2024, fewer than five patients were admitted as an inpatient with this primary diagnosis. I am not able to release the exact number, as small numbers 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.

There were no patients seen in the Emergency Departments between February and April 2025 with a primary diagnosis of giant cell arteritis. There were however 21 patients seen in the Emergency Departments during this period where giant cell arteritis was mentioned in the presenting complaints notes as a possible condition.

Question:

3. How many patients were treated by the rheumatology department in the past 3 months with the following: a) Tocilizumab – for any disease; b) Tocilizumab for rheumatoid arthritis (RA) only; c) Tocilizumab for giant cell arteritis (GCA) only

Answer:

We are not able to provide historical information for the past three months, but the table below details the number of patients currently being treated:

Tocilizumab treatment, current patients, NHS Lothian	
Treatment	Number of patients
Tocilizumab for any disease	227
Tocilizumab for rheumatoid arthritis	86
Tocilizumab for giant cell arteritis	80

Question:

4. How many patients were treated by the ophthalmology department (for any disease) in the past 3 months with Tocilizumab?

Answer:

11 patients.

Question:

5. How many patients were treated in A&E in the past 3 months for giant cell arteritis (GCA) with Tocilizumab?

Answer:

This information is not collected centrally. Information will be held in individual patient records, but in order to provide the information you request it would be necessary to review each patient 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.

There has been no issue of Tocilizumab to the Emergency Departments in the past 3 months.

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