

Date 04/07/2025
Your Ref
Our Ref 10211

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Dear

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION – PATIENT MONITORS

I write in response to your request for information in relation to patient monitors.

Question:

- Could you please provide the current - and, if different, historic to circa twenty years - schedule of routine replacement of patient monitors in your NHS facilities.

Answer:

NHS Lothian *initially* assesses the lifespan of each fleet of medical equipment prior to purchase based on the data provided by the manufacturer in their Pre-Acquisition Questionnaire (PAQ) and our own field experience. NHS Lothian sets a default lifespan of ten years and this has been the Health Board's policy for at least the last 20 years. Typically, a manufacturer will define a lifespan for their product of between seven and ten years. The Board recognises that in practice a fleet's lifespan is likely to change during the in-service period for a number of reasons:

- (i) Field experience demonstrates that equipment reliability is resulting in the fleet becoming prematurely uneconomic to repair,
- (ii) The manufacturer prematurely declares the model end-of-life or out-of-support,
- (iii) A lack of funding for replacement necessitates extending the fleet lifespan beyond the original end-of-lifespan date, or
- (iv) The clinical state of the art has progressed significantly and the fleet's capabilities no longer meet the minimally acceptable clinical standards.

Consequently, "lifespan" is considered to be a dynamic property of each fleet which is kept under constant review.

The Board's initial lifespan for its current high-acuity patient monitoring solution and its low-acuity (spot) observations monitors were both defined as ten years. In the case of the Board's current high-acuity patient monitoring, the oldest devices in this fleet are now 14 years old. The manufacturer has declared the devices out-of-support at the end of 2026 and the Board

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currently has a tender process underway to replace them. Consequently some devices will be 16 years old when they are replaced. The Board's spot observations monitors were also defined with a ten year lifespan and this currently remains unchanged with the oldest devices now eight years old.

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 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