

Date 08/08/2025
Your Ref
Our Ref 10329

Enquiries to Richard Mutch
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Dear

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION – WHISTLEBLOWING

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

Question:

Broken down for the financial years 2014/15 to 2024/25 (11 financial years),

1. The total number of whistleblowing concerns that were reported.
2. Before the National Whistleblowing Standards were introduced on 1 April 2021, the number of concerns that were a) upheld; b) not upheld.
3. Since the National Whistleblowing Standards were introduced on 1 April 2021:
 1. The number of whistleblowing concerns that were reported to the board at stage 1.
 2. How many of those concerns were resolved at stage 1 or were referred on to be looked at in more detail stage 2 or beyond. 2.
4. Since the National Whistleblowing Standards were introduced on 1 April 2021:
 1. The number of whistleblowing concerns that were reported to the board at stage 2.
 1. How many of those concerns were resolved at stage 2 or were referred to the Independent National Whistleblowing Officer.
5. Since the National Whistleblowing Standards were introduced on 1 April 2021:
 1. The number of whistleblowing concerns that were referred to the Independent National Whistleblowing Officer.
 2. The outcome of the referral and investigation.

Answer:

NHS Lothian introduced the Whistleblowing Policy in October 2016, prior to the introduction of the National Whistleblowing Standards on 1st April 2021

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

Whistleblowing Concerns Reported (2016/17 – 2024/25)

Between the financial years 2016/17 and 2024/25, a total of **78 whistleblowing concerns** were reported. The annual breakdown is as follows:

- **2016/17:** 3 concerns
- **2017/18:** 13 concerns
- **2018/19:** 8 concerns
- **2019/20:** 9 concerns
- **2020/21:** 3 concerns
- **2021/22:** 14 concerns
- **2022/23:** 11 concerns
- **2023/24:** 10 concerns
- **2024/25:** 7 concerns

Prior to the implementation of the National Whistleblowing Standards the language used to describe the outcomes was not consistent, nor as concise; case outcomes being described as '*nothing further to investigate / no further action*' or '*recommendations following the investigation*'.

Before the implementation of the National Whistleblowing Standards on 1 April 2021, the outcomes of reported concerns were as follows:

- **2016/17:**
 - 1 case nothing further to investigate.
 - 2 cases had recommendations.
- **2017/18:**
 - 7 cases nothing further to investigate.
 - 6 cases had recommendations.
- **2018/19:**
 - 4 cases nothing further to investigate.
 - 4 cases had recommendations.
- **2019/20:**
 - 6 cases nothing further to investigate.
 - 3 cases had recommendations.
- **2020/21:**
 - 1 case nothing further to investigate.
 - 2 cases had recommendations.

Since the introduction of the Standards, **4 concerns** were reported to the board at Stage 1. All were resolved at this stage.

A total of **38 concerns** were reported at Stage 2. Of these:

- **30** were resolved at Stage 2
- **8** were referred to the **Independent National Whistleblowing Officer (INWO)**

INWO Referral Outcomes

The outcome of the referral and investigation.

- **202202634** – Upheld, the Board was asked to implement several recommendations and consider and reflect on other feedback.
- **202205108** – Investigation discontinued, the Board, complainant and INWO agreed deliverable action that would resolve the complaint.
- **202208266** - Board committed to a deliverable action to resolve the complaint, INWO decision was to discontinue the investigation in this case.
- **202301159** – Upheld, the Board was asked to implement several recommendations and consider and reflect on other feedback.
- **202403178** – Investigation discontinued with agreement from the Board, complainant and INWO.
- **202300371** – Upheld, the Board was asked to implement several recommendations, and consider and reflect on other feedback. The INWO Investigation report is due to be published in August.

These can be found via the following link:-

[Search | INWO](#)
[Independent National Whistleblowing Officer | INWO](#)

There are two investigations on-going at this time

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.

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.nhslothian.scot/FOI/Pages/default.aspx>

Yours sincerely

ALISON MACDONALD
Executive Director, Nursing
Cc: Chief Executive