

Dear

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION – OUTPATIENT APPOINTMENTS

I write in response to your request for information in relation to outpatient appointments in NHS Lothian.

Question:

Can you provide the following for the financial years 2014/15 to 2024/25 (11 financial years)

1. The total a) available outpatient appointments; b) used outpatient appointments; and c) unused outpatient appointments (unused appointments counts appointments that were unfilled or cancelled).

Answer:

We are not able to provide information on the number of available outpatient appointments or the number of unused outpatient appointments as this information is not collected centrally. Information may be held in department records, but in order to provide the information you request it would be necessary to review each department 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.

The number of attended outpatient appointments during this period is detailed in the table below:

Attended outpatient appointments, NHS Lothian	
Year	Number of attended appointments
2014/15	1,655,658
2015/16	1,733,153
2016/17	1,778,729
2017/18	1,757,492
2018/19	1,806,654
2019/20	1,846,884
2020/21	1,820,652
2021/22	2,119,509
2022/23	2,211,809
2023/24	2,399,546
2024/25	2,409,519

Question:

2. The total a) cancelled outpatient appointments; b) cancelled outpatient appointments for non-clinical/capacity reasons.

Answer:

Numbers of cancelled outpatient appointments by reason are detailed in the table below.

Cancelled outpatient appointments by reason, NHS Lothian							
Year	Could not attend	Cancelled by service	Booked in error	Covid cancellation	Other reason	Not recorded	Total
2014/15	249,085	155,022	62,457	0	5,246	38,851	510,661
2015/16	261,571	169,620	61,493	0	5,036	28,518	526,238
2016/17	269,865	183,456	62,133	0	5,266	30,113	550,833
2017/18	282,355	200,461	64,384	0	4,988	38,781	590,969
2018/19	278,002	199,734	65,448	2	5,101	32,158	580,445
2019/20	287,384	229,207	72,356	26,110	5,193	32,163	652,413
2020/21	145,018	239,518	91,666	112,660	5,204	38,870	632,936
2021/22	236,614	250,739	88,936	16,984	5,725	27,378	626,376
2022/23	296,137	260,452	96,312	1,917	6,013	45,615	706,446
2023/24	332,401	261,730	109,572	4	7,224	57,661	768,592
2024/25	333,596	285,673	98,980	0	5,696	57,092	781,037

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

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Cc: Chief Executive