

Dear

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION – COMPLEX SPINAL CENTRE

I write in response to your request for information in relation to complex spinal care in NHS Lothian.

Question:

1. Types of Spinal Surgeries

What types of spinal procedures are currently being performed at your hospital/trust? Specifically, please indicate whether the following categories are included:

- Deformity correction
- Decompression procedures
- Minimally Invasive Spine (MIS) surgery
- Spinal fusion
- Disc-related procedures (e.g. discectomy, disc replacement)

Answer:

A large list of possible spinal procedures is performed in NHS Lothian, including all of those listed above.

Question:

2. Volume of Procedures

How many spinal surgeries (broken down by type as per above) were performed in the past 12 months (or latest available full year)? Please provide a monthly or quarterly breakdown if possible.

Answer:

The information you have requested is detailed in the table below. I have not released numbers of 5 or fewer in the table, as this information 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.

Spinal Procedures, July 2024 to June 2025, NHS Lothian				
Procedure	Jul-Sep 2024	Oct-Dec 2024	Jan-Mar 2025	Apr-Jun 2025
Operations on Cervical Spine	42	38	29	44
Denervation of Spinal Facet Joint of Vertebra	0	≤5	0	0
Operations on Lumbar Spine	117	105	93	107
Primary Microdiscectomy of Lumbar Intervertebral Disc	0	≤5	0	0
Lumbar Laminectomy	2	0	≤5	≤5
Primary or Revisional Fusion of Spine	0	0	0	≤5
Diagnostic Spinal Puncture	≤5	≤5	0	2
Therapeutic Spinal Puncture	0	≤5	≤5	0
Operations on Spinal Cord	≤5	8	≤5	≤5
Stabilisation of Spine	≤5	≤5	10	7
Reduction or Fixation of Fracture of Spine	0	0	≤5	0
Other Operations on Spine	≤5	0	≤5	≤5
Operations on Spinal Nerve Root	≤5	33	11	11
Operations on Thoracic Spine	13	8	12	8
Drainage of Spinal Canal	≤5	≤5	≤5	≤5

Question:

3. Key Spinal Surgeons

Please provide the names and positions of the consultant spinal surgeons currently performing spinal surgeries at your hospital/trust. If possible, include any subspecialties (e.g., deformity, MIS, oncology, trauma).

Answer:

12 consultant neurosurgeons are employed in the department and all perform spinal surgeries. Subspecialist practice is performed predominantly, but not exclusively, by Andreas Demetriades, Sonnie Khan and Ali Kawsar.

Question:

4. Use of Bone Scalpel Technology

Is the BoneScalpel system (either Legacy or Nexus) used in any spinal procedures? If not, please clarify:

- Has the system been trialled previously?
- Are clinicians or procurement staff aware of this technology?

Answer:

Yes, the BoneScalpel system is used.

Question:

5. Current Surgical Tools in Use

What instruments or technologies are currently being used for bone cutting during spinal surgery?

How old are the capital Devices?

Answer:

Sonopet devices are used. The devices are 3 years old.

Question:

Are surgeons using traditional tools such as Kerrisons and osteotomes, or are ultrasonic devices such as Sonopet in use?

Answer:

All of these tools and devices are in use.

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

Executive Director of Nursing Midwifery and AHPs

Cc: Chief Executive