

Dear

## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION – LEARNING DISABILITY ANNUAL HEALTH CHECKS

I write in response to your request for information in relation to annual health checks for people with learning disabilities in NHS Lothian.

**Question:**

I am interested to know how the money that was allocated for annual health checks for people with learning disabilities is being spent. Please provide the following information:

1. Confirmation that the money allocated to provide these checks each year from the Scottish Government has been spent exclusively on that purpose. If not, please reveal what other health areas it has been spent on.

**Answer:**

The allocation from the Scottish Government was added to the existing Learning Disabilities teams budgets across the Health and Social Care Partnerships to fund healthcare services for patients with learning disabilities. It is not possible to track expenditure specifically against annual health checks.

**Question:**

2. Please provide a breakdown of the total amount of money allocated to the board by the government each year the funding has been given. Please break this down by financial year. Please also reveal the total amount of the money that was spent. Please also reveal in % terms of how much of the money has been spent.

**Answer:**

The table below details the allocations from the Scottish Government in relation to annual health checks for people with learning disabilities. In 2024/25 the funding was made recurring and has become part of baseline funding for the Health and Social Care Partnerships.

<b>Scottish Government funding to NHS Lothian for learning disabilities annual health checks</b>		<b>Allocation</b>
<b>Year</b>		
2022/23		£299,408

2023/24	£299,409
2024/25	£279,303

The table below shows how the allocations have been split between the Health and Social Care Partnerships in Lothian:

<b>Learning Disability allocation distribution, NHS Lothian Partnership</b>		<b>2022/23 and 2023/24</b>	<b>2024/25</b>
Edinburgh		£166,994	£155,479
East Lothian		£37,338	£35,378
Midlothian		£32,530	£30,723
West Lothian		£62,576	£57,723

Question:

3. If the annual health check funding has been transferred to other budgets or has been spent for other purposes in each year, then please provide a breakdown of the amounts that were spent and for what purpose.

Answer:

Please see the answer to Q1 above. All the allocated money was transferred to the Learning Disabilities Teams budgets.

Question:

4. Reveal the number of patients the board is aware of who are eligible for a check but has never received one to date. In other words, how many people since the policy was announced in 2022 have been eligible for one but has yet to receive their first check. Please also reveal how many people that is out of the total amount of eligible people. (people who have and who not received one)]

Answer:

The total number of people eligible for a learning disabilities health check in NHS Lothian is 3,975.

Prior to the year 2024/25, the health checks were carried out as part of routine practice by the Community Learning Disability Nurses and GP or GP Practice Nurses and the number of annual health checks carried out for this period is not recorded centrally. Information may 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.

From the year 2024/25 provision transitioned to a fully funded Scottish Government model which has allowed recording of activity. This data is detailed in the table below:

Learning disability annual health checks, NHS Lothian		
Health checks	2024/25	2025/26 (to date)
Offered	878	1,233
Accepted	751	797

Published data is available at the following link on to the Scottish Government's website:  
<https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-annual-health-checks-for-people-16-with-learning-disabilities-2024-25/>

Question:

5. Please provide a copy of the last piece of correspondence the board has had with the Minister for Social Care Tom Arthur on annual health checks for people with learning disabilities.

Answer:

The latest correspondence received from the Minister for Social Care was on 29 January 2025 and is enclosed.

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.nhslothian.scot/FOI>

Yours sincerely

**ALISON MACDONALD**  
**Executive Director of Nursing Midwifery and AHPs**  
Cc: Chief Executive



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NHS Health Boards

**29 January 2025**

## **ANNUAL HEALTH CHECK DELIVERY**

We are approaching the end of the second year of implementing Annual Health Checks for People aged 16+ with learning disabilities. I wanted to take this opportunity to write to you in advance of the next national deadline for reporting progress.

As you will be aware, Scottish Ministers issued Directions in January 2023 requiring all territorial Health Boards to implement Annual Health Checks by 31 March 2024 (those Directions revoked and replaced a 2022 set of Directions). To date this has been supported by £6 million of funding from the Scottish Government. My officials have also led a programme of extensive support, via the National Implementation Group, for practitioners within Health Boards who are responsible for delivery of the Health Checks.

The issue of Directions to Health Boards reflects the importance that Ministers place on Annual Health Checks. People with Learning Disabilities die on average 20 years earlier from health conditions that are mainly treatable or preventable.

The Scottish Government's guidance to NHS Boards on the development of their Delivery Plans for 2025-26 includes a specific ask that plans set out how Boards will deliver the Annual Health Checks, and achieve compliance with Boards' legal duty through the Directions.

Evidence collected from health checks delivered so far has illustrated benefits such as identifying unmet health needs and secondary referrals being processed to address areas of concern. This includes referrals for screening which will contribute to improved cancer diagnosis and treatment. I know that you will agree that this is a positive step in the right direction to improve the life expectancy, health and wellbeing of people with learning disabilities.

Tha Ministearan na h-Alba, an luchd-comhairleachaidh sònraichte agus an Rùnaire Maireannach fo chumhachan Achd Coiteachaidh (Alba) 2016. Faicibh [www.lobbying.scot](http://www.lobbying.scot)

Scottish Ministers, special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See [www.lobbying.scot](http://www.lobbying.scot)

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I want to express my thanks to the Health Boards who have taken the necessary action to implement and deliver Annual Health Checks. I appreciate the work that staff in local areas have put into this. However, the figures published up to the end of March 2024 (<https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotsh-annual-health-checks-for-people-16-with-learning-disabilities/>) provide a varying picture in terms of implementation (summary included in Annex). There has undoubtedly been some good progress over the remainder of 2024, but I remain concerned that Health Boards still need to make significant progress to ensure that the legal duties under the Directions are met and that delivery is consistent across the country.

I am keen to address the issue of funding as I understand that the allocation of funding via the new Mental Health Enhanced Outcomes Framework may, in some areas, have resulted in reductions to, or reallocation of, funding for Annual Health Checks. This is putting current delivery at risk in some areas and, in one case, has meant that delivery has not yet started. Although Health Boards have some flexibility to prioritise and allocate the Outcome Framework funding locally, this must not be at the expense of the required outcomes being delivered or in breach of Health Boards' legal duties under the Directions.

Whilst I appreciate the challenges facing Health Boards at present, Annual Health Checks were first introduced in 2022 and accelerating implementation – particularly in those areas which are lagging behind – should be a key focus for Health Boards over the coming months. The Scottish Government will continue to provide funding and implementation support to Health Boards. My expectation is that all Health Boards in Scotland will be delivering Annual Health Checks by 31 March 2025 and that implementation is completed during 2025-26, so that all eligible individuals are offered a health check in all areas of Scotland.

My officials will work with the National Implementation Group to undertake an interim review of progress at the end of January. The next collection of formal data via national reporting processes will be for the year up to the 31 March 2025, with the Scottish Government verifying final figures in May 2025 and publication in June 2025.

Officials will continue to provide me with updates on progress from the National Implementation Group. I expect Health Boards to treat their legal duties in terms of the Directions as a matter of priority and look forward to hearing about progress and the resulting positive impact on people with learning disabilities.

With best wishes,



**MAREE TODD MSP**  
**Minister for Social Care, Mental Wellbeing and Sport**  
**Scottish Government**

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