

Dear

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION – HAIR REMOVAL

I write in response to your request for information in relation to hair removal.

Question:

1. In the past 10 years, how many individuals assigned male at birth and identifying as female have received NHS-funded facial hair removal (including, but not limited to, electrolysis and laser treatment) within your health board, as part of gender identity/gender-affirming care?

Answer:

This information is not collected centrally. This is because information about the gender history of the patient is not recorded as part of the referral. 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.

Question:

In the past 10 years, how many individuals assigned male at birth and identifying as male have received NHS funded facial hair removal (including, but not limited to, electrolysis and laser treatment) within your health board?

Answer:

This patient group would not be eligible for NHS funded hair removal.

Question:

3. In the past 10 years, how many individuals assigned female at birth have received NHS-funded facial hair removal for reasons other than cancer or reconstructive surgery – including, but not limited to, cases related to hirsutism, PCOS, mental health or emotional/psychological distress?

Answer:

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

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Snapshot data was collected in June 2024 which showed that patients receiving gender affirming treatment made up 88.46% of those receiving hair removal treatment and of these, females undergoing LHR were 11.54% of the waiting list.

Question:

4. If available, please provide a breakdown by year, and indicate whether treatment was delivered in-house or commissioned externally.

Answer:

NHS Lothian does not provide LHR or electrolysis in-house, it is all commissioned externally.

Question:

5. Additionally, please provide copies of your board's policies, guidelines and clinical criteria currently in use for assessing eligibility for NHS-funded hair removal for both:

- Individuals receiving gender identity/gender dysphoria treatment
- Individuals with dermatological, endocrine, or aesthetic concerns

Answer:

Link to Scottish Government ERP Guidance attached.

[CMO\(2019\)05 - Exceptional Referral Protocol \(previously known as the Adult Exceptional Aesthetic Referral Protocol\) – refresh April 2019](#)

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