

Dear

## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION – REMOVAL REASON

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

### Question:

- According to the Public Health Scotland Waiting Times Recording Manual the reasons for patients being removed from a waiting list are recorded under 'Removal Reason' and 'Code'.

For example, when a patient has been removed from an NHS waiting list because they've had private treatment/operation the 'removal reason' states "Attended/admitted at private sector" and 'Code' is 13 (or at least was in ***Waiting Times Recording Manual Version 5.6 published November 2022***).

I would like to request the following information based on the above:

1. The number of patients being removed from an NHS waiting list due to attending or being admitted at the private sector.

[Please note: I am referring to patients who have chosen to pay for private treatment; not patients that are being treated as NHS patients at a private healthcare clinic].

I would like this information for the last 8 calendar years (2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025 and 2026).

Clarification about my FOI: If you do not hold the data for all the years requested then please still provide the data in full for the years you do hold.

Also, if you do not differentiate between patients who pay for private treatment and those who are receiving private treatment through the NHS then please still provide the data.

### Answer:

I am advised that the removal reasons we have in Trak does not currently record this so we are unable to extract information to answer your request.



Under the Freedom of Information Act NHS Lothian is not required to create new records to enable it to respond to your enquiry. This information is not collated or held in aggregate form and it would be necessary to review all case files relating to patients over the period you have requested to assemble the information you seek. Even if NHS Lothian did this – and there would be significant cost implications in doing so – it would be unable to respond in full to your request. The information requested is therefore exempt under section 12.1 – Cost.

I am further advised that this reason has been added recently (January 2026) so going forward we will be able to extract this detail. We will not be able to provide historical data for the reason provided above

I am sorry I cannot help with your request at this time.

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](http://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