

Date 26/02/2026  
Your Ref  
Our Ref 11077

Enquiries to Richard Mutch  
Extension 35687  
Direct Line 0131 465 5687  
[loth.freedomofinformation@nhs.scot](mailto:loth.freedomofinformation@nhs.scot)  
[richard.mutch@nhs.scot](mailto:richard.mutch@nhs.scot)

Dear

## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION – FOOD COSTS

I write in response to your request for information in relation to patient food costs.

Question:

1. What is the total annual cost to your health board for all food for patients. (Please can you provide a breakdown for the last five years).
2. What is the top five food products for patients that your health board spends the most money on annually. (Please could you provide that information for the last five years).
3. What food product for patients does your health board spend the least money on annually? (Please provide that information for the last five years).

Answer:

I am advised that we cannot separate out patient from staff costs so cannot provide an accurate response. 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 finance and catering information relating to patients and staff 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.

Question:

4. What five most frequent meals provided to patients in your health board.

Answer:

The most frequent patient meal options are not collected centrally to be able to accurately provide that level of detail. As above The information requested is therefore exempt under section 12.1 – Cost.

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*



I am sorry I cannot help 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](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