

Dear

**FREEDOM OF INFORMATION – SPIKING**

I write in response to your request for information in relation to incidents of spiking.

Question:

- Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, I would like to request the following information your organisation may hold regarding incidents of spiking:  
 The number of recorded incidents of suspected spiking cases from October 2021 – September 2025, broken down by month where possible. Where available, provide a breakdown of the information, such as grouped data or percentages:

Answer:

Discharge Year	Number
2021	0
2022	5<
2023	5<
2024	0
2025	0

To protect the identity of the individuals involved any figure of 5 or less has not been shown in the table above. Since we do not have their consent to release this data from their records, the information is exempt under section 38(1)(b) of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act i.e. to provide it would breach the Data Protection Act (2018).

1. Patients are counted in the year of inpatient discharge
2. 'Spiking cases' has been identified with ICD10 code 'X85 - Assault by drugs, medicaments, and biological substances' in any position
3. Due to small numbers, information has been provided by calendar year

Question:

- Type of spiking methods – needling, drink spiking, food spiking, vape spiking and any other means

Answer:

This information is not recorded in acentrally extractable format. 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.

Question:

- Gender – Male, Female, Non-binary, Not disclosed, Other Age group of individuals at the time of alleged spiking –
  - below 18
  - 18 to 24
  - 25 to 34
  - 35 to 44
  - 45 and above

Answer:

The numbers involved are too small to be provided. We have exempted this under section 38(1)(b) of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act i.e. to provide it would breach the Data Protection Act (2018).

Question:

- Setting/location type where spiking took place (bar, nightclub, private residence, university accommodation, others)

Answer:

This information is not recorded in acentrally extractable format. 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.

Question:

- Copies of or link to any guidance, protocols, or policies your organisation has for responding to suspected spiking incidents.

**Answer:**

We do not have specific policies or guidance in relation to this. We treat all potential toxic presentations related to the clinical picture and advice from Toxbase (the National Poisons Information Service). If people suspect they have been intentionally poisoned then they need to contact Police Scotland.

As per Section 17 of the Freedom of Information of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 formally I must Advise that we do not hold this 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](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