

Date 26/02/2026  
Your Ref  
Our Ref 11112

Enquiries to Richard Mutch  
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Dear

## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION – DENTAL CARE

I write in response to your request for information in relation to dental care for children.

Question:

### Child tooth extractions

1. The number of children (i.e. under 18 years old) who have had a tooth extracted due to tooth decay under general anaesthetic in hospital. Please provide this for the calendar years 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, and 2025 (most recent data available).

Answer:

I am advised that we do not hold this information in a centrally 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.

All that will be recorded will be they are listed for a GA for dental procedure. It should be noted that some extractions can be on otherwise healthy teeth, for example to support orthodontic treatment.

Question:

2. The **median completed wait** for a child tooth extraction due to tooth decay under general anaesthetic in hospital. Please provide this for the calendar years 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, and 2025 (most recent data available).

Answer:

As above. I am advised that we do not hold this information in a centrally 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

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Edinburgh EH3 9DN

Chair Professor John Connaghan CBE  
Chief Executive Professor Caroline Hiscox  
*Lothian NHS Board is the common name of Lothian Health Board*

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:

3. The **longest completed wait** for a child tooth extraction due to tooth decay under general anaesthetic in hospital. Please provide this for the calendar years 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, and 2025 (most recent data available).

Answer:

As above - I am advised that we do not hold this information in a centrally 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.

We also would not release detail of an individual longest wait as this would be identifiable – Section 38(1)(b) of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 – personal information.

Question:

4. The **number of children currently on a waiting list** for a child tooth extraction due to tooth decay under general anaesthetic in hospital.

Answer:

As above. - I do not believe that we will know what reason a tooth was taken out from the data collected; all that will be recorded will be they are listed for a GA for dental procedure. It should be possible to report number of children on waiting list for paed dent GA.

Question:

5. The **median ongoing** for a child tooth extraction due to tooth decay under general anaesthetic in hospital.

Answer:

As above. I am advised that we do not hold this information in a centrally 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:

6. The **longest ongoing** for a child tooth extraction due to tooth decay under general anaesthetic in hospital.

Answer:

As above. I am advised that we do not hold this information in a centrally 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.

We also would not release detail of an individual longest wait as this would be identifiable – Section 38(1)(b) of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 – personal information.

Question:

**Tooth decay**

7. The number of children admitted to hospital due to tooth decay. Please provide this for the calendar years 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, and 2025 (most recent data available).

Answer:

As above . As above. I am advised that we do not hold this information in a centrally 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.

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