

Date 13/04/2026  
Your Ref  
Our Ref 11199

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Dear

## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION – GP APPOINTMENTS

I write in response to your request for information in relation to GP Appointments.

Question:

- Please provide the **recorded information held by your Board** showing **how many GP practices** in your Board area operate an appointment access system where a patient who contacts the practice **during the day is routinely unable to request/secure an appointment** and is instead told to **call again at (or around) 08:00 the next working day** to join a telephone queue and attempt to obtain an appointment (i.e., appointment requests are deferred to a short morning window — commonly experienced by patients as the “8am scramble”).

In addition, please provide copies of any **recorded** Board materials from **1 January 2020 to present** that describe, analyse, monitor, or seek to improve GP appointment access models in your Board area, including any reference to:

- appointment slots being released at a set morning time (e.g., 08:00),
- restricted morning call windows or daily cut-off points,
- patients being asked to “call back tomorrow”,
- call-handling/telephony capacity or queue management, and/or
- call-back systems or other measures intended to reduce repeated calling.

Answer:

Most GP practices in Lothian are independent contractors to the NHS and therefore how they operationally manage their practice, including their appointments and equipment, is their responsibility.

Scottish Government have published guidance to assist general practices when procuring new, more advanced telephony solutions, and for Health Boards and Health & Social Care Partnerships (HSCPs) or others supporting the practices in this process however, as independent contractors, General Practices decide how they want to make services available to their patients. <https://www.publications.scot.nhs.uk/files/dctelephony.pdf>

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

We do not hold information in relation to practice appointments and are therefore unable to provide this.

We do not hold any recorded information that describes, analyses, monitors or seeks to improve GP appointment access models.

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

In relation to the small number of 2c practices they are still operating under the GMS contract, and follow the same system. Same-day or bookable appointments will depend on the patient's presentation.

	<b>Aug-25</b>	<b>Sep-25</b>	<b>Oct-25</b>	<b>Nov-25</b>	<b>Dec-25</b>	<b>Jan-26</b>	<b>Total</b>
Allied Health Professionals	4,876	0	0	22,150	19,819	28,816	75,662
Registered Agency Nursing	108,535	100,471	83,450	81,147	50,409	36,798	460,810
Unregistered Agency Nursing	224,897	200,976	144,141	17,660	17,660	17,595	622,930

I am sorry I cannot help further 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.nhsllothian.scot/FOI/Pages/default.aspx>

Yours sincerely

**ALISON MACDONALD**  
**Executive Director, Nursing**  
Cc: Chief Executive