

Date 16/04/2026  
Your Ref  
Our Ref 11289

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Dear

## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REVIEW – DENTAL CARE

I write in response to your request for review of NHS Lothian's response to your Freedom of Information request about dental care for children. Having discussed your request and our response of, 26 February 2026, I can respond as follows:

Original Request and Response:

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).

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*

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:

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. 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. 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.

Review Request:

- I would like to request a review of this FOI response as I have FOI'd every Health Board in Scotland this request - and other than a delayed apology from Grampian - I have been able to get the data from every other one. I would be quite surprised that Lothian does not follow the same data gathering rules when regarding Child Dentistry as the other health boards.

Review Response:



Enclosed is a spreadsheet to help answer your request

Please note that for question 3 and 6 in relation to longest individual waits this information remains exempt as it would be identifiable. – Section 38(1)(b) of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 – personal information. The 90<sup>th</sup> percentile has been provided.

If you are not satisfied with this response you still have the right to make a formal complaint to the Scottish Information Commissioner who you can contact at the address below or using the Scottish Information Commissioner's Office online appeals service at <https://www.foi.scot/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.

Scottish Information Commissioner  
Kinburn Castle  
Doubledykes Road  
St Andrews, Fife  
KY16 9DS  
Telephone: 01334 464610  
Fax: 01334 464611  
e-mail: [enquiries@foi.scot](mailto:enquiries@foi.scot)

Yours sincerely

**Freedom of Information Reviewer/  
NHS Lothian**  
cc: Executive Nurse Director  
Enc.

FOI: 11289

**Request:**

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).
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).
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).
4. The number of children currently on a waiting list for a child tooth extraction due to tooth decay under general anaesthetic in hospital.
5. The median ongoing for a child tooth extraction due to tooth decay under general anaesthetic in hospital.
6. The longest ongoing for a child tooth extraction due to tooth decay under general anaesthetic in hospital.
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).

**Date Extracted:** 30/03/2026

**Source:** NHS Lothian TRAK  
*\*Please note that this analysis comes from a LIVE System - if this analysis were to be re-run at a later date the figures may be subject to change.*

**Extracted by:** Lothian Analytical Services

**Notes:**

Q1, Q2 and Q3: Table 1 describes waiting times and the number of distinct patients in each year who had an inpatient or daycase stay in NHSL (aged under 18 at the time of admission), under an associated waiting list entry, for which an OPCS code of F09 (Surgical removal of tooth) or F10 (Simple extraction of tooth) was recorded in subsequent clinical coding.

Q4, Q5, Q6: Table 2 describes waiting times and the number of distinct patients currently on the waiting list (aged under 18 at the time of addition to the waiting list) for a local procedure with description of 'Paediatric Dental Surgery (Minor)', 'Dental Surgery (Minor)', 'Surgical Removal Tooth/ Teeth', or 'Simple Extraction Of Tooth/ Teeth'.

Q7: Table 3 shows the number of distinct patients in each year who had an inpatient or daycase stay in NHSL (aged under 18 at the time of admission) for which an ICD10 code of K02 (Dental caries) was recorded in subsequent clinical coding.

Note that although the vast majority of patients would have had a general anaesthetic, the decision regarding mode of anaesthesia is made on the day in light of clinical presentation and other factors, and it is likely that not all patients had a general anaesthetic.

Table 1 is not limited to tooth extraction due to tooth decay, but rather includes all tooth extractions recorded in clinical coding, regardless of the reason for extraction.

Table 2 is not necessarily limited to tooth extraction since it is likely that a small number of the patients described are on the waiting list for other minor dental surgery.

The admissions described in Table 3 are not limited to tooth dental caries only. That is, it is likely that some patients were admitted to hospital for other reasons but also had dental caries as one of their admission diagnoses.

**Response:**

**Table 1**

Year	Distinct Patients	Median Wait (days)	90th Pct Wait (days)
2021	655	47	255
2022	966	154	348
2023	964	124	475
2024	1004	222	520
2025	1163	226	518

**Table 2**

Distinct Patients	Median Wait (days)	90th Pct Wait (days)
777	128	299

**Table 3**

Year	Distinct Patients
2021	597
2022	845
2023	772
2024	834
2025	987