

Date 29/04/2026  
Your Ref  
Our Ref 11349

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 – BREAST SCREENING

I write in response to your request for information in relation to breast screening.

### Question:

- According to this NHS Inform page - [Breast screening in Scotland | NHS inform](#) - a woman undergoing a mammogram as part of the national screening programme will:

*"receive 1 of 3 results:*

- *normal result*
- *positive result*
- *inconclusive result"*

What criteria were applied in 2020 and 2023 and are applied now by the reporting radiologist to determine whether results are classified as normal, positive or inconclusive?

What national or professional guidance/criteria did/does the reporting radiologist refer to when making their determination?

If a patient were found to have "indeterminate calcification" on their first mammogram (age 50-53) undertaken during the screening process in September 2020, would this result in a normal, positive or inconclusive report?

If a patient were found to have "indeterminate calcification" on their second mammogram (age 53-56) undertaken during the screening process in July 2023, would this result in a normal, positive or inconclusive report?

If a patient had received a "positive" result in either September 2020 and/or July 2023, what would then happen have happened?

### Answer:

When reading mammograms at screening outcomes are:

- Recall for assessment

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*

- Normal routine recall ( no recall and return to normal screening - 3yrs)
- Technical recall (Recall for further images if technically first images not adequate - blurring etc.)

1.2. All readers are trained to high standards and follow the NICE guidelines for breast screening. The breast screening centres and readers go through annual quality assurance. Individuals have their performance assessed to ensure they are meeting the standards as per national breast screening programme.

3.4. If readers thought there were indeterminate calcification on a mammogram they would be recalled for assessment. If they thought the calcifications were benign they would not be recalled.

5. If recalled then there would be a history taken and breast examination. Further mammograms to assess the area and an ultrasound if thought appropriate. If assessed as normal or benign then - return to screening in 3 years for routine mammograms. If thought to be abnormal or indeterminate then a biopsy would be carried out.

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.nhsllothian.scot/FOI/Pages/default.aspx>

Yours sincerely

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