

Dear

**FREEDOM OF INFORMATION – PALLIATIVE CARE**

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

Question:

1. Total number of beds dedicated to end-of-life care and palliation within the health board with a breakdown of location (IE the Royal Infirmary) and ward between January 1, 2021 - January 1, 2026.
2. Number of patients who had end of life or palliative care across all hospitals in the health board between January 1, 2021 - January 1, 2026 - if possible, can I get a breakdown of those who were on a specialist ward and those who received it out with that IE on a cardiology or oncology ward etc.
3. Could I also get the number of beds dedicated to end-of-life care and palliation that have been cut in 2026 so far also with a breakdown of location and ward.

Answer:

1.	Within our hospitals (acute and community), we do not have any beds dedicated to end of life and palliation. Caring for a dying patient is a core skill we expect all of our staff to be able to deliver, and they have support from the Hospital Palliative Care team to do this work.
2.	It is not possible to give the number of patients receiving palliative care, as palliation runs alongside active treatment for a large proportion of patients and is not usually coded. Data on the number of deaths in acute hospitals in NHS Lothian by year is available publicly (National Records Scotland have published data for 2024). We are not able to break this down further into specialty ward areas.*
3.	As above – there are no dedicated beds within our hospitals

\*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

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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





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