

Dear

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION – PARACETAMOL

I write in response to your request for information in relation to paracetamol incidents.

Question:

- For the financial year 2024/25 (1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025), please provide the following information. If complete data for this period is not yet available, please provide the most recent 12-month period for which complete data is held, and specify the dates covered.
 1. The total number of patients who presented to your emergency department(s) with paracetamol overdose or suspected paracetamol toxicity.
 2. Of those presentations, how many involved patients aged 17 years or under. If possible, please break this down by the following age groups: 0-11 years, 12-15 years, 16-17 years.

Answer:

Table 1 - The total number of patients who presented to your emergency department(s) with paracetamol overdose or suspected paracetamol toxicity.

Year	Unique patients
FY 2024-25	875

Table 2 - Of those presentations, how many involved patients aged 17 years or under. If possible, please break this down by the following age groups: 0-11 years, 12-15 years, 16-17 years.

Age-Band	Unique patients
0 - 11	42
12 - 15	124
16 - 17	58

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 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



Question:

3. Of all presentations, where this information is recorded, how many were classified as: (a) accidental overdose or therapeutic excess - defined as an unintentional overdose taken for therapeutic purposes; (b) intentional self-poisoning; (c) unknown or unclassified.
4. Of all presentations, how many involved a combination product containing paracetamol - such as a cold and flu remedy, co-codamol or similar - rather than paracetamol alone?

Answer:

NHS Lothian are unable to answer this question (i) as it would involve a detailed search of clinical notes; (ii) this level of detail may not be complete in all cases.

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. 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