

Date 14 July 2026
Our Ref 11602

Enquiries to Richard Mutch
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Dear

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION – MATERNITY COMPLAINTS

I write in response to your request for information in relation to maternity complaints.

Question:

- For each financial year from 2020/21 to the most recent year available:
 1. The total number of complaints received relating to maternity services.
 2. The number of maternity complaints identified through keyword searches of complaint records using any of the following terms (or similar variants used by the Board):
 - birth trauma
 - traumatic birth
 - post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
 - mental trauma following childbirth
 - informed consent
 - failure to obtain consent
 - not listened to / concerns ignored
 - birth injury
 - perineal tear
 - obstetric anal sphincter injury (OASI)

Answer:

Complaints	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	Total
Maternity Services	88	96	80	98	107	140	609
Total	88	96	80	98	107	140	609

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	Total
Birth Trauma	0	0	5<	0	0	0	5<

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	Total
Traumatic Birth	5<	0	0	0	5<	0	5<

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	Total
Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)	0	0	0	5<	0	0	5<

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	Total
Mental Trauma Following Childbirth	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	Total
Informed Consent	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	Total
Failure to Obtain Consent	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	Total
Not Listened to / Concerns Ignored	0	5<	0	0	0	0	5<

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	Total
Birth Injury	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	Total
Perineal Tear	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	Total
Obstetric Anal Sphincter Injury (OASI)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

We have used the terms you have requested to search the complaints database using a free text search. It is possible that some of these issues may have been part of more complaints, but did not come up using these key terms. In order to clarify this, we would have to review each maternity related complaint in the database over the period you have requested, requiring significant resources. Under section 12 of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002, NHS Lothian is not required to respond to your request if the resources required to do so equate to more than £600 in cost.

To protect the identity of the individuals involved any figure of 5 or less has not been shown in the tables above. Since we do not have their consent to release this data from their records, the information is exempt under section 38(1)(b) of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act i.e. to provide it would breach the Data Protection Act (2018).

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