

Date 27 August 2026
Your Ref
Our Ref 11774

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Dear

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION – DENTAL CONSULTANTS

I write in response to your request for information in relation to Dental Consultants.

Question:

1. Does the argument that it's not "clinically safe" simply mean that there aren't enough WTE consultants?
2. How many WTE consultants are required for treatment to be "clinically safe"?
3. The July 5th minute says that "recruitment continues". What was the result of that recruitment?
4. Why has there been no additional recruitment?
5. Who decided that there should be no additional recruitment?
6. When was that decision last made?
7. I asked about approval by **Lothian Health Board**, not the Executive Leadership Team. Has this continuing non-treatment been approved by the Board? If so, when?

Answer:

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| 1. | <p>The wording Clinically safe refers to both Orthodontic treatment and surgical procedures to support this pathway were severely curtailed during the covid pandemic, resulting in a bottleneck of patients both in and awaiting treatment. Keeping patients in orthodontic treatment for extended periods results in risks of iatrogenic dental disease. It was agreed to pause new referrals for the orthognathic pathway, until there was surgical throughput and capacity within the pathway, allowing acceptance of new referrals without delays. This is to reduce the increased risk of iatrogenic dental disease for patients who experience delays.</p> <p>Iatrogenic dental disease refers to conditions that arise from dental procedures or treatment. These diseases can be caused by various factors, including improper dental restorations, orthodontic therapy, and other dental interventions.</p> <p>A common Orthodontic iatrogenic factor includes:
Long term device application can cause trauma to the gingiva and periodontal tissues. Preventative measures are essential to mitigate the risks associated with this factor and careful orthodontic treatment can help maintain Oral health and prevent iatrogenic dental disease.</p> |
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2.	It is not about the number of consultants it is about the treatment that the patients receive in the pathway. Our current consultant cohort is 2.2WTE
3.	As previously described, we have recruited to the levels within the Services budget establishment. There are 4 Orthodontic consultants totalling 2.2WTE. From this total there are 2.00 WTE substantive consultants and 0.2WTE locum consultant. At the time when recruitment was mentioned in the 5th July minute, we were looking to recruit 1 WTE consultant however we actually recruited 2 consultants who job share the WTE post. There is no further additional recruitment at this time.
4.	We do not think at present that we require further Orthodontic consultant recruitment.
5.	No decision was made about no additional recruitment; it is down to available budget
6.	Not applicable.
7.	The decision did not require to be approved by Lothian Health Board as it was within the remit of approval by the Executive Leadership Team.

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