

Date 10 September 2026
Your Ref
Our Ref 11804

Enquiries to Richard Mutch
Extension 35687
Direct Line 0131 465 5687
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Dear

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION – ABORTION

I write in response to your request for information in relation to abortion.

Question:

1. The number of patients for whom your organisation has arranged, funded, or reimbursed travel outside Scotland (including to England) for abortion services.

Answer:

16 patients.

Question:

2. The number of patients referred to independent sector providers, such as, but not limited to, the British Pregnancy Advisory Service, for abortion care. Where possible to name the provider, please do.

Answer:

16 patients were referred to British Pregnancy Advisory Service (BPAS).

Question:

3. The total annual amount paid by your organisation to independent sector providers for abortion services. If possible, please distinguish between:
 - Procedure/treatment costs
 - Administrative or contractual fees

Answer:

£35,590.98. (British Pregnancy Advisory Service does not invoice separately for administrative or contractual fees; nor for travel and accommodation; these are incorporated within the BPAS invoice for treatment costs)

Question:

4. The total annual cost incurred by your organisation in funding or reimbursing:
 - Patient travel (e.g. flights, rail, taxis)
 - Accommodation

- Subsistence or related expenses

Answer:

The cost given in response to point 3 includes patient travel and accommodation as travel and accommodation are organised by BPAS. (Patients are not eligible for subsistence or related expenses)

Question:

5. Please confirm whether your organisation centrally records:

- The number of patients travelling outside Scotland for abortion care
- The total cost associated with such cases

If the information is held in a structured dataset, I would be grateful if it could be provided in its original format. If any of the requested information is held but exempt from release, please provide as much detail as possible and specify the relevant exemption(s).

If the cost of complying with this request exceeds the statutory limit, please advise how the request may be refined to fall within cost limits.

Answer:

NHS Lothian centrally records numbers of patients travelling outside of Scotland for abortion care and the total cost associated with such cases. The data is held by the NHS Lothian Safe Haven Office for out-of-area referrals. NHS Lothian cannot provide the raw data in spreadsheet format as this contains patient identifiable data. Section 38(1)(b) – personal information.

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

Yours sincerely

ALISON MACDONALD
Executive Director, Nursing
Cc: Chief Executive