

Date 10 September 2026
Your Ref
Our Ref 11851

Enquiries to Richard Mutch
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Dear

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION – APPOINTMENT BOOKING

I write in response to your request for information in relation to appointment booking.

Question:

1. An explanation of the PSB process and its intended purpose.
2. Details of the response timescales currently applied to patients receiving appointment booking correspondence.
3. The rationale and evidence supporting those timescales.
4. An explanation of the specific operational problem or objective that this process is intended to address, and how NHS Lothian measures whether it is achieving that objective.
5. Details of any equality, accessibility or patient experience considerations that informed the design of the process.
6. An explanation of why appointments staff are unable to exercise discretion where a patient makes contact shortly after a deadline has expired.
7. Information on how NHS Lothian monitors the impact of this process on patient access and patient experience.
8. Confirmation of whether NHS Lothian has reviewed the effectiveness of this process and, if so, the outcome of any such review.

I would also be interested to understand:

9. How many working days patients are actually given to respond before being removed from the booking pathway.
10. Whether any audit has been undertaken regarding the number of patients who fail to respond within the timescale.
11. Whether NHS Lothian has assessed whether the process disproportionately affects particular patient groups.

Answer:

1.	Scottish Government National Waiting Times Guidance 2023 NHSScotland waiting times guidance: November 2023 - gov.scot
2.	NHS Lothian Equality & Children's Rights Impact Assessment Evidence 2025 https://org.nhslothian.scot/equality-human-rights/wp-content/uploads/sites/36/2026/01/IA-report-Implementation-of-WTG-Evidence-.pptx

3.	See enclosed. Effective Patient Booking for NHS Scotland
4.	See links above
5.	See links above
6.	This information is either not held in a centrally extractable format or not held at all.
7.	
8.	
9.	No: They get 21 calendar days from the day the letter is generated and PFB is run on different days of the week. We cannot account for whether patients access letters digitally or their mail delivery timescales.
10.	No: We have checked with the Waiting Times Governance Team and there has been no target audit specifically on patients removed due to no contact following PFB.
11.	Yes: This is part of the ECRIA (link 2)

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
 Enc.