

Dear

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION – SURGICAL WAITING TIMES

I write in response to your request for information in relation to surgical waiting times in NHS Lothian.

Question:

Please provide the following information for Priority 2 (P2) surgery for each month from May 2022 to September 2022 inclusive:

1. The number of patients waiting for P2 surgery at the end of each month.
2. The number of patients who underwent P2 surgery during each month.
3. The waiting time for P2 surgery, preferably broken down into:
 - o the median waiting time;
 - o the mean waiting time, if available; and
 - o the number and/or percentage of patients waiting more than 4 weeks, 8 weeks and 12 weeks.
4. The longest waiting time recorded for a patient awaiting P2 surgery in each month.
5. If available, please provide the above information broken down by surgical speciality.

For clarity, by "P2 surgery" I mean procedures classified by NHS Lothian as Priority 2, where the patient's clinical condition requires surgery within a specified clinically appropriate timeframe.

If the information is held in a different format or under different terminology, please provide the closest equivalent information held by NHS Lothian.

Answer:

NHS Lothian does not use the P2 priority classification (used in NHS England). An 'urgent' classification can be used by clinicians when referring patients for surgery, but there is no measured waiting times standard for this classification. The clinician would state in the referral notes how soon treatment is required for urgent cases, but this will not specifically be within 4 weeks and would mostly include patients expected to wait longer than that.

As the expected treatment time for urgent referrals is recorded in free text on the referral, information about the number of patients referred for treatment within 4 weeks and what

their actual waiting time was is not collected centrally. Information may be held in individual patient records, but in order to provide the information you request it would be necessary to review each patient record over the period you have specified, 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.

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 <https://www.foi.scot/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 reviewer at the address at the top 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>

Yours sincerely

ALISON MACDONALD
Executive Director of Nursing Midwifery and AHPs
Cc: Chief Executive