Lothian NHS Board

NHS Lothian Headquarters
Waverley Court
4 East Market Street
Edinburgh
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www.nhslothian.scot

Date 21 October 2026
Your Ref
Our Ref 11968

Enquiries to Richard Mutch
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loth.freedomofinformation@nhs.scot
richard.mutch@nhs.scot

Dear

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION – RHEUMATOLOGY

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

Question:

1. What is the resident population size for NHS Lothian Health Board?
2. What is the ideal number of rheumatology consultants for the aforementioned population size?
3. How many WTE consultant rheumatologists do you currently employ in your rheumatology team/s?
4. How many WTE associate specialists do you currently employ in your rheumatology team/s?
5. How many WTE specialist rheumatology physiotherapists do you currently employ in your rheumatology team/s
6. How many WTE specialist rheumatology occupational therapists do you currently employ in your rheumatology team/s
7. How many WTE specialist rheumatology podiatrists do you currently employ in your rheumatology team/s
8. How many WTE pharmacists to you currently employ in your rheumatology team/s who are part of the rheumatology multidisciplinary team?
9. Do you employ any specialist talking therapy staff who are employed in your rheumatology multidisciplinary team?
10. How many WTE Specialist Nurses do you currently employ in your rheumatology team?
11. Proportion of work done on behalf of GPs (expressed as WTE consultant session/PA) e.g. prescribing/monitoring DMARDs, responding to queries from Teams appointed to support GPs (e.g. Pharmacists/ANPs/FCP) which would have been addressed by a GP in the practice etc.
12. Planned consultant retirements/partial retirements in the next 3 years for the rheumatology department
13. Planned consultant retirements/partial retirements in the next 5 years for the rheumatology department
14. Planned Senior/Lead Nurse Specialist retirements/partial retirements in the next 3 years
15. Planned Senior/Lead Nurse Specialist retirements in the next 5 years for the rheumatology department

Answer:

1.	The population size for NHS Lothian can be found on the National Record of

	Scotland's website: https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/publications/mid-2025-population-estimates/. The latest data shows an estimated population of 935,460 for NHS Lothian Health Board as of June 2025.
2.	1:80,000
3.	8.4WTE
4.	2
5.	0.75 WTE
6.	0.89 WTE
7.	0.2 WTE
8.	3.0 WTE
9.	No
10.	7.76 WTE
11	This information is not held in a centrally extractable format.*
12.	2
13.	0
14.	0
15.	0

Under the Freedom of Information Act NHS Lothian is not required to create new records to enable it to respond to your enquiry. This information is not collated or held in aggregate form and it would be necessary to review all case files relating to patients over the period you have requested to assemble the information you seek. Even if NHS Lothian did this – and there would be significant cost implications in doing so – it would be unable to respond in full to your request. The information requested is therefore exempt under section 12.1 – 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 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