

Freedom of Information request 231-18

Request

I would like to make the following request under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002.

1. When alcohol or drugs is a contributing factor in the death of a patient, please tell me:
 - (a) what advice, support or other information is made available to family members/next of kin
 - (b) does the health board have a policy or guidelines for supporting bereaved family members/next of kin
 - (c) is there an information leaflet or any other literature which is made available to families/next of kin?
2. When a patient with an alcohol or drug dependency is admitted to hospital, please tell me:
 - (a) what advice, support or other information is made available to family members/next of kin
 - (b) does the health board have a policy or guidelines for supporting family members/next of kin
 - (c) is there an information leaflet or any other literature which is made available to families/next of kin?

Please provide me with copies of any such policy, guidelines and literature/leaflet provided - in both cases of when a patient dies or is admitted to hospital.

Response

- 1a) There are two adult treatments services in Borders (NHS Borders Addiction Service and Addaction). Both of these services will (where it is known) make contact with the next of kin following a bereavement and also provide links to further support e.g. bereavement services such as Scottish Families Affected by Alcohol and Drugs/Cruise bereavement care.

Addaction can provide direct support to family of service user.

NHS Borders staff will also ensure that their Bereavement policy is followed ensuring leaflets, additional support such as the Chaplaincy team should be offered if appropriate or signposting to web sites www.sad.scot.nhs.uk and www.nhsinform.co.uk/bereavement or for specialist services and will be directed to their GP.

- b) Yes. NHS Borders Bereavement Policy which refers specifically to guidelines published by University of Stirling/University of Bath for those whose work bring them into contact with adults bereaved after a drug or alcohol-related death. These have also been provided by the ADP to Police, Drug & Alcohol Services and Substance Misuse Liaison Nurse. These were also discussed at a multi-agency Drug Death Prevention Seminar.

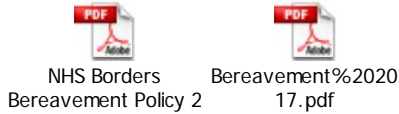
Addaction have a formal guideline in place.

- c) The two adult alcohol & drug treatment services provide written information about [Scottish Families Affected by Alcohol and Drugs](#) (SFAD) to clients who contact the service which can be shared with family members and can direct support people affected to the Bereavement Service, however, at the moment this is not routinely issued.

As per NHS Borders policy, "[When Someone has Died](#)" together with the "Coping with Bereavement" leaflets are provided to the bereaved family before they leave the hospital or as soon after the death in the community.

- 2a) The Substance Misuse Liaison Nurse (SMLN) within the Borders General Hospital provides care to patients admitted to the ward. This postholder is able to provide information about SFAD services although there is not a pathway in place.
- b) There is no formal pathway.
- c) While the SMLN can offer this information it is not routinely provided.

Documents referred to in response:



If you are not satisfied with the way your request has been handled or the decision given, you may ask NHS Borders to review its actions and the decision. If you would like to request a review please apply in writing to, Freedom of Information Review, NHS Borders, Room 2EC3, Education Centre, Borders General Hospital, Melrose, TD6 9BS or foi.enquiries@borders.scot.nhs.uk.

The request for a review should include your name and address for correspondence, the request for information to which the request relates and the issue which you wish to be reviewed. Please state the reference number **231-18** on this request. Your request should be made within 40 working days from receipt of this letter.

If following this review, you remain dissatisfied with the outcome, you may appeal to the Scottish Information Commissioner and request an investigation of your complaint. Your request to the Scottish Information Commissioner should be in writing (or other permanent form), stating your name and an address for correspondence. You should provide the details of the request and your reasons for dissatisfaction with both the original response by NHS Borders and your reasons for dissatisfaction with the outcome of the internal review. Your application for an investigation by the Scottish Information Commissioner must be made within six months of your receipt of the response with which you are dissatisfied. The address for the Office of the Scottish Information Commissioner is, Office of the Scottish Information Commissioner, Kinburn Castle, Doubledykes Road, St Andrews, Fife.