

Freedom of Information request 243-18

Request

I am getting in touch as we are looking at the issue of Xanax or alprazolam in Scotland, which has been linked to several drug-related deaths in recent years.

I was looking to get the following figures from the health board. If this is not available via the press office, but would be more suited to a Freedom of Information request, would you be able to advise me please?

Could you please tell me how many alprazolam-related deaths the health board has recorded in 2016, 2017 and in 2018 (so far).

Response

As of the current date there are no recorded deaths held on the NHS Borders patient management system where Xanax was noted as a contributing factor in the years 2016, 2017 and 2018.

Note:

The National Records of Scotland (NRS) holds details of all deaths which are registered in Scotland.

Drug-related deaths are identified using details from the death registrations supplemented by information from a specially-designed questionnaire, which is completed by forensic pathologists and lists the drugs and solvents that were found. NRS will produce figures on the 'drugs which were implicated in, or which potentially contributed to, the cause of death basis. Deaths are counted on the basis of the calendar year in which they are registered rather than the year of occurrence (as the latter might not be known). NRS closes its statistical database for a calendar year about five or six months after the end of the calendar year. 2017 drug related deaths have not been released by National Records of Scotland.

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 **243-18** 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.

