

## Freedom of Information request 71-19

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### Request

1. When was the last time NHS Borders completed a major incident simulation exercise? Please list each hospital who would respond to a major incident.
2. How many hospitals within the Health Board have completed a full major incident exercise since 1999? Please state which hospitals, and what year.
3. How regularly must hospitals with NHS Borders complete a major incident simulation exercise?
4. Is there a number of casualties indicative of a "major incident" within NHS Borders, if so please provide the figure.
5. In a major incident simulation exercise, what is the expected increase in patient capacity across NHS Borders?
6. When is the next major incident simulation exercise for NHS Borders scheduled? Please list each hospital?
7. When was the major incident procedure for NHS Borders at each hospital last updated?
8. Is there an overspill protocol prepared in case of patient capacity being exceeded?
9. Is there a policy in place within NHS Borders with regards recruiting or calling in extra staff to cover any "major incident"?
10. Which departments would need extra staff to come in after a major incident? Please name each department, and the number of extra staff who would be contacted in the major incident simulation exercise.
11. Which hospitals are designated "treatment centres" to be used during "emergency simulations"? Please provide details of any areas set aside for simulated casualties during such an exercise.
12. How many simulated casualties are drafted in for such exercises?
13. What is the current patient capacity number for emergency departments, A&E, radiology, surgery theatres, trauma centre, and any other departments required for a major incident?

### Response

1. The Board undertakes tabletop resilience exercises annually, both within the Board and with multi-agency partners in respect of Borders General Hospital.

Borders General Hospital is the only hospital in NHS Borders area which would undertake a major incident response.

NHS Borders activated its major incident plan in response to a serious road accident which occurred in December 2018 and effective response was undertaken.

2. Borders General Hospital is the hospital which would respond to a major incident in NHS Borders area. The major incident declaration and invocation on 29 December 2018 exercised each element of the major incident plan.

3. Scottish Government Guidance states:

Major incident plans should be:

- exercised in full at least every 3 years;
- tested through a table-top exercise every year; and
- communicated/cascaded within the organisation and to partners every 6 months

In 2016, Scottish Government advice to NHS Borders was that a multi-agency tabletop would cover the requirement to exercise in full every 3 years. Resilience tabletop exercises conducted in 2016 and annually thereafter demonstrated BGH compliance with this requirement.

4. There is no specific number of casualties indicative of a major incident within NHS Borders. This would depend on the type of casualty, their triage level (indicating their likely need of immediate surgery/ITU admission/Hospital admission or ED style treatment and later discharge) as well as age and specific injury patterns (eg burns). Communication and engagement with Scottish Government has been held regarding what would constitute a mass casualty situation. On notification of a major incident by the emergency services, NHS Borders assesses the likely number of casualties to be received against the current capacity of the hospital. If the casualties would overwhelm normal services, the decision to invoke the major incident procedure would be taken.
5. In any exercise the expected number of casualties would be assessed against the current capacity.
6. A tabletop exercise will be held in 2019. NHS Borders is currently debriefing staff and reflecting on the learning points of the December major incident to inform any learning and changes required.
7. The major incident procedure was updated in 2018.
8. NHS Borders escalation policy would be applied.
9. The major incident procedure incorporates a telephone call out cascade procedure.
10. All departments listed in the call out procedure would be called – attachment 1 – each department has its own lists of staff that would be called in the cascade process; both on call staff and staff who are not on duty would be contacted. The call process for major incidents is tested regularly; there were 3 tests in 2018. These are undertaken separately from table top simulations.



callout list for  
FOI.pdf

11. Borders General Hospital does not currently undertake emergency simulation with simulated casualties at present.
12. Not applicable.
13. A major incident is an event whose definition is dependent on exceeding the capacity for the normal running of the services. There is variation in terms of staffing and patient attendance for any unscheduled care service. As a district general hospital, we will have limited access to certain specialties and limited critical care beds which will have variable level of patients admitted at any time. Hence absolute numbers are not helpful here. A major incident for the BGH will be declared when capacity in any of these areas are over run which will be dependent on patient numbers and their level of illness/injury compared to the staffing and inpatient capacity. What could be considered a very busy day at mid day on a weekday may trigger a major incident on a weekend night shift. Four patients with major burns may trigger a major incident while 20 patients with minor injuries may not.

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](mailto: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 **71-19** 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.