

Freedom of Information request 194-19

Request

I would like an update on my previous FOI request which I have attached.

1. Please give me the number of confirmed drug related deaths in NHS Borders between 1.1.2018 and 31.12.2018;
2. And the number of confirmed drug related deaths for NHS Borders for 1.1.2017 and 31.12.2017.
3. Please also give me the number of suspected drug related deaths that are still being investigated in your health board from 1.1.2018-31.12.2018.

Response

1. There were 21 confirmed drug related deaths investigated by the Drug Related Death Review Group between 1.1.2018 and 31.12.2018.
2. There were 10 confirmed drug related deaths investigated by the Drug Related Death Review Group between 1.1.2017 and 31.12.2017.

Within the National Records Scotland Drug Related Death Report for 2017, there were 13 drug related deaths in Scottish Borders. This is a difference from the number investigated by the DDRG (10).

Differences between these figures are explained due to the following reasons:

- The NRS includes drug deaths based on the date the deaths were registered (which may be some time past the actual date of death), whereas the DDRG consider deaths based on the actual date of death. This means that some deaths occurring towards the end of December can be considered in different calendar years.
 - The majority of the difference in the two data sets is accounted for due to use of different interpretations of the definition of a drug death, which remains a complex topic. The Scottish Borders DDRG does not review deaths where there is no previous history of substance misuse e.g. suicide using controlled drugs
 - Further information on the definition and reason for difference is reported here.
<https://www.isdscotland.org/Health-Topics/Drugs-and-Alcohol-Misuse/Publications/2018-06-12/2018-06-12-NDRDD-Report.pdf>
3. There are no outstanding suspected drug related deaths still being investigated in NHS Borders from 1.1.2018-31.12.2018.

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 **194-19** 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.