

Freedom of Information request 399-19

Request

As you will be aware, there are considerable number of people in Scotland who are deaf or hearing impaired. The majority of them do not use British Sign Language [BSL].

Health Boards are required in terms of the Equality Act 2010 to undertake reasonable adjustments to their systems and methods of operating to ensure that deaf and hearing impaired people who do not use BSL have equal access to the functions and services provided by your Board. In providing access by phone to the Board for deaf and hearing impaired people not using BSL, Minicom and Next Generation Text Relay [NGTR] are the most common alternatives currently offered.

In the context of the Freedom of Information [Scotland] Act 2002, I am writing to ask about the provision of access by phone to the functions and services of your Board for people who are deaf or hearing impaired and who do not use BSL and for people for whom English is not their first language.

The information I request relates to the ability of your Board to provide equality of access to and experience in services via the phone. In particular, I ask that you provide me with :

1. How many incoming phone calls were made to all the Board's functions and services over the last 3 complete calendar years
2. How many of the total incoming phone calls were enabled by Language Line, Big Word or similar in each of the 3 years
3. How many of the total incoming phone calls were made via Minicom, NGTR or similar in each of the 3 years
4. How many of the phone calls enabled by Language Line, Big Word or similar were audited for quality assurance purposes, both in relation to the accuracy of the call content enabled but also in relation to medical advice offered in each of the 3 years covered by this request
5. In those calls selected for quality assurance, what was the average level of accuracy of call content, expressed as a percentage, in each of the 3 years and what was the average level of accuracy of medical advice offered, expressed as a percentage, in each of the 3 years
6. How many of the phone calls enabled by Language Line, Big Word or similar were tested for user satisfaction in each of the last 3 years and what were the user satisfaction outcomes in each of those years
7. How many of the phone calls enabled via Minicom, NGTR or similar were audited for quality assurance purposes, both in relation to the accuracy of the call content enabled but also in relation to medical advice offered in each of the 3 years covered by this request
8. In those calls selected for quality assurance, what was the average level of accuracy of call content, expressed as a percentage, in each of the last 3 years, and what was the average level of accuracy of medical advice offered, expressed as a percentage, in each of the 3 years
9. How many of the phone calls enabled via Minicom, NGTR or similar were tested for user satisfaction in each of the last 3 years and what were the user satisfaction outcomes in each of those years

10. How many people live in the geographical area covered by your Board's services and functions
11. How many deaf or hearing impaired people not using BSL live in the geographical area covered by your Board ?

Response

1. Please find below the number of incoming telephone calls to the Borders General Hospital, Melrose in the last 3 calendar years. No further data is recorded for other Health Board premises:

2016 – 987530
2017 – 883121*
2018 – 987187

* There was a fault with the call logging system that went undetected for about a month in 2017, hence the drop in calls for that year.

2. NHS Borders uses an SMS service to communicate with deaf or hard of hearing patients. We do not have Language Line or Big Word. We have a Minicom unit held in switchboard which can be used when required or utilise the NGTR service.
3. This data is not recorded, therefore under Section 12 of the FOI(S)A 2002 this data is not held.
4. Not applicable.
5. Not applicable.
6. Not applicable.
7. No phone calls enabled by the Minicom unit were audited for quality assurance purposes.
8. Not applicable.
9. No phone calls enabled by the Minicom unit were tested for user satisfaction.
10. There are approx 115,020 people living in the Scottish Borders area.
11. This information is not recorded by NHS Borders, therefore under Section 12 of the FOI(S)A 2002 this data is not held.

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 **399-19** 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.