

Freedom of Information request 444-19

Request

Could I please obtain the figures on how many NHS patients in your area have been prescribed benzodiazepine since January 1 2009?

Could I also obtain the figures on how many patients have either a) died or b) gone into further care following a benzodiazepine prescription since January 1 2009?

Response

There have been 26,759 patients prescribed benzodiazepine on an NHS prescription dispensed in the NHS Borders area between January 2009 and July 2019.

There were 5320 patients with a mortality status of deceased who have been prescribed benzodiazepine in the past 10 years. Please note these deaths may not be as a direct result of this drug treatment.

NHS Borders are unable to provide data on the number of patients who have gone into further care following a benzodiazepine prescription since January 2009 as this data is not held electronically but may be held in a patient's notes. To extract this data would require a manual trawl of all notes and the cost of carrying out this work would exceed the limit set in the Fees Regulations therefore under Section 12 of the FOI(S)A 2002 we are not required to provide.

Under Section 15 'Duty to provide advice and assistance' of the FOI(S)A 2002 data 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 **444-19** 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.