

Freedom of Information request 544-19

Request

I'm doing some research into a story about drug waste in Scotland.

I understand this is a significant and long-running issue which is costing the NHS millions of pounds every year.

For instance, in the latest figures released by NHS Fife as part of its Take Stock initiative, 28 tonnes of unwanted medicines were returned in the past year. Wasted medicines also cost the health body an estimated £2.1 million per year.

Can you please provide your latest figures on this issue (annual cost, volume of medicine wasted) in the past three years to now? In addition please explain the steps you are taking to prevent this from happening?

Response

NHS Borders are unable to quantify the cost or volume of wasted medicines, therefore this information is not held and under Section 17 of the FOI(S)A 2002 we are unable to provide.

NHS Borders previously ran a campaign to bring the medicines waste to the attention of the public and we plan to re-run this campaign in 2020. Between the two campaigns the NHS Borders Prescribing Support Team are working with practices to complete patient medication reviews which should have the result of reducing future waste as well as enhancing patient safety.

Under Section 15 of the FOI(S)A 2002 Duty to provide advice and assistance the reason we are unable to quantify the data requested is explained below:

NHS Borders collect unwanted medicine waste on a regular basis from Community Pharmacies and a record is kept of the number of bins which are returned. These bins are not opened or weighed therefore we do not know the contents or volume of each returned container so cannot provide a cost associated with unwanted medicines in the Scottish Borders area.

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 **544-19** 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.