

Freedom of Information request 143-20

Request

I request the following under the freedom of information (Scotland) act 2002:

Any and all information that would detail what provisions the service have to preform emergency Christian Baptism or supply a priest ordained by the Roman Catholic Church for the last rights to a patient dying of Severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (COVID19) (nCoV2019) (Coronavirus Disease) upon that patient's insistence within the jurisdiction of NHS Borders.

Response

The provision of Spiritual Care within NHS Borders is made in accordance with the Board's Spiritual Care Policy. In line with patient-centred care, a patient's successfully transmitted request for a Christian rite will always be responded to. Requests for rites of the Roman Catholic Church are usually referred through the Spiritual Care department to a local priest, and this has worked satisfactorily.

Any other Christian rite sought would be acted on by the Chaplaincy team. The lead Chaplain to NHS Borders is an ordained Church of Scotland minister who is in the position to provide the sacrament of adult baptism at the request of patients themselves – or infant baptism at the request of parents.

Should, for any reason, the Chaplain be unavailable the responsibility would devolve to a willing member of the local clergy. Should another member of the clergy be the preferred choice for administering the rite, that is the free decision of any patient and would be helpfully respected.

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 **143-20** 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.