

Freedom of Information request 46-22

Request

I would like to request the following information under the Freedom of Information Act:

1. In this health board, how many GPs are currently providing out-of-hours care? Please provide this information at the time of making this inquiry as well as for the 1 April 2021, 1 April 2020, 1 April 2019 and 1 April 2018.
2. In this health board, how many GP shifts are needed to provide full out-of-hours care each week?
3. In the last year, on how many occasions have out of hours shifts for GPs not had a full complement of GPs in this health board?
4. In this health board, what is the total number of out of hours GP shifts that have been unfilled? Please provide this information in terms of number of hours that have been unfilled for the financial years of 2017-18, 2018-19, 2019-20, 2020-21 and so far in 2021-22. If it not possible to provide this figure in terms of hours unfilled, please provide the number of unfilled shifts.
5. In this health board, what are the average waiting times for patients requiring out-of-hours care, from the initial phone call to a GP arriving at their address in each of the last 12 months?

Response

1. The following numbers of GP's are providing out of hours (OOH) care:

February 2022:	Two salaried GP's and 26 sessional GP's.
April 2021:	Three salaried GP's and 27 sessional GP's.
April 2020:	One salaried GP and 23 sessional GP's.
April 2019:	Four salaried GP's and 30 sessional GP's.
April 2018:	Six salaried GP's and 30 sessional GP's.

Please note: many gaps were known about and prepared for in advance with cognisance to the anticipated levels of service demand and patient safety.

2. At NHS Borders 18 GP shifts are required per week to provide full out of hours care.
3. From 1 April 2021 to 8 February 2022 there were 97 occasions when NHS Borders OOH service did not have a full complement of GPs. To ensure service resilience and patient safety the following measures were explored and implemented in accordance to circumstance: extend the shift duration of other GPs also on shift at the time, increase Advanced Nurse Practitioner provision, increase the Nurse Practitioner capacity, provide remote GP telephone support and consider referral direct to speciality.

4. The following number of hours that GP shifts have been unfilled:

2017-18	324 hours
2018-19	308 hours
2019-20	478 hours
2010-21	486 hours
2021-22 (to 8 February 2022):	514 hours

5. This information is not held, as defined in Section 17, Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002.

Please note: Borders Urgent Care Centre is an ex-directory number and the patient pathway for accessing NHS Borders OOH urgent primary care is via NHS 24. Borders Urgent Care Centre operates in accordance with national guidelines of a 1, 2 or 4 hour response time for either a telephone consultation, appointment at the hub or patient home visit.

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 **46-22** 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.