

## Freedom of Information request 69-22

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### Request

1. Dates of all communication from the Scottish Government regarding continuity plans for cancer services since September 2019 to the date of this FOI
2. Emergency plans that were specific to the treatment of cancer for all possible emergencies including during COVID
  - Cancer treatments that were deemed priority
  - Priority matrix that was used to determine prioritisation
  - What determined a service to be suitable to be paused
  - Demand for treatment versus capacity for treatment since 1st March 2020
3. Emergency plans in place for all emergencies by type of emergency and how often they are updated
4. Changes to cancer diagnosis and treatment pathways before, during and after COVID with dates of changes
5. The number of patients screened through screening service provision in August 2018 to July 2019 (inclusive) and August 2020 to July 2021 (inclusive)
6. The number of further investigations identified from screening between August 2018 to July 2019 (inclusive) and August 2020 to July 2021 (inclusive)
7. The number of cancer patients diagnosed at stage 1, 2, 3 and 4 cancer in calendar years 2019, 2020 and 2021 broken down by cancer type
8. The cancer death figures for calendar years 2019, 2020 and 2021 broken down by cancer type
9. The average time between referral after screening and GP appointment for further investigation and elective surgery for the treatment of bowel and breast cancer in August 2018 to July 2019 (inclusive) and August 2020 to July 2021 (inclusive)

### Response

1. This information is not held, as defined in Section 17, Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002.
2. Please see below for the emergency plans that were specific to the treatment of cancer for all possible emergencies including during Covid-19 at NHS Borders:
  - Cancer treatments that were deemed priority and all patients with a confirmed cancer diagnosis have been deemed as the highest priority.
  - NHS Borders worked to the National Prioritisation Framework issued by the Scottish Government to NHS Boards in November 2020, this can be found at <https://www.gov.scot/publications/supporting-elective-care-clinical-prioritisation-framework/pages/clinical-classification-of-patients> and therefore under Section 25 of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 is accessible elsewhere.
  - Clinical teams were asked to prioritise patients waiting according to the national framework mentioned above, and clinical judgement in respect of relative urgency. As a Board, capacity was protected for the highest priority patient groups, that being in order of priority emergency care, cancer

care and then other urgent care. On that basis elements of care were protected in a majority of clinical services, the actual was level dependant on the proportion of work associated with higher priority or cancer activities. NHS Borders established both a Clinical Prioritisation Group, and a Clinical Prioritisation Board to ensure decision were consistent and clinically led.

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

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

4. The changes to cancer diagnosis and treatment pathways before, during and after Covid-19 at NHS Borders:

- In March 2020, some patients requiring surgery for Breast cancer were started on hormone treatment to delay progression of cancer so that surgery could be delayed.
- For January to March 2022, patients suitable for surgery at Golden Jubilee are being referred there for Colorectal surgery as there are risks around local ITU capacity

5. Screening programmes in NHS Scotland are run nationally and therefore under Section 25 of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 this data is accessible elsewhere. For your information please find a link to NHS Inform: <https://www.nhsinform.scot/healthy-living/screening>

6. This information is not held electronically. The data may be held in a patient's record, but to extract this data would require a manual trawl of all patient records and the cost of carrying out this work would exceed the limit set in the Fees Regulations of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 and under Section 12 we are not required to provide.

7. Please see attached below:



Question 7.xlsx

8. Please see attached below:



Question 8.xlsx

9. The average number of days between the decision to treat and treatment are as follows:

	01/08/18 - 31/07/19	01/08/20 - 31/07/21
Breast	11	11
Colorectal	12	14

Please note that as NHS Borders is such a small Board and some numbers provided are very small, to provide further details could allow individuals to be identified and we would be in breach of the Data Protection Act 2018. We are therefore withholding all other data under Section 38(1) of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002. This is in accordance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics that any number that is less than five, actual numbers and potentially identifiable information is withheld to help maintain patient confidentiality due to potential risk of disclosure. Further information is available in the ISD Statistical Disclosure Control Protocol.

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](mailto: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 **69-22** 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.