

Freedom of Information request 82-22

Request

I am writing to request information regarding services that you provide for musculoskeletal conditions, and specifically low back pain. I would appreciate your help with the following questions. The questions are all with regards to outpatient and/or community physiotherapy services:

1. What is the current average waiting time for a musculoskeletal physiotherapy appointment for a new referral or self-referral for non-specific lower back pain? (if you are not able to answer this specifically for low back pain please provide the figure for musculoskeletal physiotherapy more generally)
2. How has the waiting time for musculoskeletal physiotherapy appointments for lower back pain changed over the historical time period for which you have data? If possible, an annual figure for each of the last 5-10 years would be most helpful. (Again, please answer for general musculoskeletal physiotherapy services if you do not hold specific data for back pain).
3. How many patients are currently on your waiting list(s) for physiotherapy services for lower back pain?
4. How many patients are currently on your waiting list(s) for physiotherapy services across all musculoskeletal conditions?
5. Does your musculoskeletal physiotherapy service(s) accept self-referrals from patients for back pain (as opposed to requiring a GP or primary care referral)?
6. What percentage of general practice appointments within your region are for back pain? (or musculoskeletal conditions more broadly if this is the only data level held)
7. What is the average healthcare spend per patient in your region for non-specific low back pain?
8. How does the average healthcare spend per patient for non-specific low back pain break down across different services and costs?
9. Do you currently commission NHS musculoskeletal physiotherapy services from any private providers? If yes, what proportion of your overall MSK physiotherapy spend is with private providers?

Response

1. Patients presenting with musculoskeletal (MSK) conditions at NHS Borders are triaged into two categories, routine and urgent. The average waiting time for routine patients is 16 weeks and the average waiting time for urgent patients is 0 weeks.
2. How waiting times change over a time period is not recorded and therefore this information is not held, as defined in Section 17, Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002.
3. There are currently 318 patients on a waiting list for physiotherapy services for lower back pain.
4. There are currently 932 patients on a waiting list for physiotherapy services across all musculoskeletal conditions.

5. NHS Borders has a fully established First Contact Practitioner Service in all GP practices across the Borders and MSK teams have an established self referral process.
6. All GP Practices in the Scottish Borders are independent contractors and not managed by NHS Borders. This information can be accessed by contacting the GP Practices directly, therefore please note under Section 25 of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 this data is accessible elsewhere.

Under Section 15 of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 information on all GP practices within the Borders area is available at: <http://www.nhsborders.scot.nhs.uk/patients-and-visitors/our-services/a-z/g/>

7. NHS Borders does not record spend per patient, therefore this information is not held, as defined in Section 17, Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002.
8. NHS Borders does not record spend per patient, therefore this information is not held, as defined in Section 17, Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002.
9. No, NHS Borders does not commission NHS musculoskeletal physiotherapy services from any private providers.

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 **82-22** 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.