

Freedom of Information request 95-22

Request

1. How many referrals has the health board made which involves patients being sent to:

- a. NHS England or
- b. Out with the UK for treatment,

Broken down by

- i. year since 2015,
- ii. reason for referral and
- iii. total cost of annual referrals

Response

1.
 - a. NHS Borders endeavours to promote where possible the provision of health care within locally available services or local commissioned services. This is to protect and sustain local services to the benefit of all Borders residents. Due to the demographics of the area, NHS Borders has Service Level Agreements (SLA) in place with three English health trusts, Northumbria Healthcare, Cumbria Healthcare and NHS Newcastle. All agreements cover both emergency and elective activity for Borders patients to be treated within their facilities.

NHS Borders does not have one database that holds all patient activity for patients being treated out of area. As the work required to provide the information requested would exceed the amount prescribed for responding to requests made under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002, under Section 12(1) Excessive cost of compliance the information provided is reports of patients seen within the 3 main agreements of the above English Health providers.

- i. The table below outlines the total number of patients per year who have been seen within the three main agreements of the above English Health providers since 2015:

Year	Patient Contacts Seen
2016-17	2,375
2017-18	2,266
2018-19	2,540
2019-20	1,987
2020-21	1,318

Please note:

- The patient activity provided above is the number of contacts seen in each, this is not the number of patients. Some patients may be seen several times in one year.
- Patients accessing services in any of these 3 English trusts may not necessarily be referred into the specialty by NHS Borders health professionals. For example they may be referred into English Trusts by their registered GP in England.

- ii. The information received and held by NHS Borders does not identify a reason for the referral being made, therefore this information is not held, as defined in Section 17, Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002.
- iii. As per response above, the total cost of all activity sent to NHS English is not available. Please see the table below for the total SLA values of the three English Health Trusts set out per the agreements in each year:

Year	SLA Value
2016-17	£810,300
2017-18	£706,679
2018-19	£630,951
2019-20	£610,803
2020-21	£628,201

Please note:

- Due to timing differences and agreements of the SLA conditions the cost set out in table 2 is not reflective to the actual activity seen in each year in Table 1 but is the value set out at the start of the financial year.
- The SLA value also includes an element for drugs and devices that is not part of a patient count in activity being treated.

- b. NHS Borders does not directly send patient's to providers out with the UK for treatment.

The Scottish care pathways for treatment would first be followed and patients referred to tertiary and/or Specialist care centres within the UK. It would be these centres that may then send patients requiring specialist treatment only available out with the UK to non-UK facilities. These would be National Funded services and NHS Borders does not hold this information, as defined in Section 17, Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002..

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 **95-22** 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.