

## Freedom of Information request 124-22

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### Request

I would like to know the following:

1. How many patients have undergone Breast Reduction Surgery in your health board since 2000? Could this be broken down by year, please.
2. How many patients are currently on the waiting list for Breast Reduction Surgery?
3. How many patients applied for Breast Reduction Surgery through their GP in the years 2010-present, and how many of these were successful? Again, broken down by year, please.
  - For all applications, can you give as much personalisation as possible – ie, average ages, average current breast size, average social deprivation status etc. Can this be broken down by year and also by whether an application was successful or not (if the number is low, I understand if this can't be given due to data protection.)
4. What is the criteria upon which GPs base the decision to either grant or reject a Breast Reduction Surgery application?

### Response

1. NHS Borders does not carry out breast reduction surgery at any of our facilities.
2. This procedure is not carried out by NHS Borders; it is carried out by NHS Lothian as the tertiary provider of care to Borders patients. This data is therefore accessible elsewhere, under Section 25 of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002. For your information please find a link to NHS Lothian's website below:  
<https://www.nhsllothian.scot/Pages/default.aspx>
3. 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.
4. Patients requiring a breast reduction due to medical reasons would normally be referred into tertiary services at NHS Lothian by their consultant. NHS Lothian as the provider of this service would triage and assess the referral and decide if the patient meets the national criteria in place to proceed through the surgical process.

Patients can also ask for a referral through their GP. These requests require prior authorisation by the Extra Contractual Referral Panel (ECR). The ECR panel review the request in line with current national guidance, "The Exceptional Referral Protocol (ERP)", before making a decision.

It should be noted that approval from the ECR panel to refer patient into NHS Lothian breast reduction services does not mean that a patient has qualified for the exceptional criteria by the provider. This would be for NHS Lothian, as the providers of care, to make the final decision upon triaging the patient referral.

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 **124-22** 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.