

## Freedom of Information request 94-23

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### Request

How many referrals has your health board made which involves patients being sent to:

- a. NHS England
- b. outwith the UK for treatment

Broken down by:

- i. year since 2012/13,
- ii. reason for referral and
- iii. total cost of annual referrals?

### Response

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 all the information requested for all patient activity would exceed the amount prescribed for responding to requests made under Section 12(1) Excessive cost of compliance the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002, the information provided is for patients seen / treated within the 3 main agreements of the above English Health providers.

- a. Data for the years 2012/13 to 2015/16 is not held, as defined in Section 17, Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002. The information for the years 2016/17 to 2021/22 is provided in the attached document. This identifies the number of patient contacts seen / treated (not referred) in each year to each of the 3 main NHS England providers of care. We have provided 2 tables one for elective inpatient/day case activity and another for outpatient activity. From the information held we cannot identify your request in a. ii. Reason for referral, therefore, this information is not held, as defined in Section 17, Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002.



FOI 94-23 Response  
Data.xlsx

Please note:

- The activity contacts information is the patients seen/treated by the Trusts as non-emergency care and not the number of referrals which we do not hold the data for referrals.
- Assumption is that NEW referrals for outpatients only are 'referred' into these providers and not Follow up appointments (which would follow on from an initial appointment or treatment),

diagnostics or drugs. This may include AHP appointments where not identified in the specialty description.

- The patient activity provided above is the number of contacts seen in each year, 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.
- The cost of the activity information of patients seen/treated is the cost per case and may not be reflective of the actual costs paid to the Trusts in each year depending on the Service Level agreement in place.

- b.** NHS Borders does not refer patients out with the UK for treatment. The only exception to this would be where a patient receives specialist care by providers out with the UK, this would be through National Service Division and any data should be provided by them to avoid a double count. Therefore, please note under Section 25 of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 this data is accessible elsewhere.

As the number of events in some areas are very small and in accordance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics 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 **94-23** 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.