

Freedom of Information request 104-23

Request

I am writing to submit an FOI concerning Referral to Treatment Waiting Times (RTT).

I would like the following data for between December 2018 to January 2023, broken down by calendar month.

Please tell me:

- 1) How many RTT pathways ended?
- 2) How many times was a patient admitted as an emergency and treated for the condition their RTT pathway related to during their emergency stay, therefore ending the RTT pathway?
- 3) How many times did an RTT pathway end due to a patient's death?

For all of the above, please base this on a count of pathways, ie if a patient left pathways for two conditions, count this as two patients having left an RTT pathway/two pathways ending.

Clarification

Which RTT pathways are you referring to? E.g., acute secondary care specialties

I am referring to all waiting lists for consultant-led care (ie the data that is used by PHS for its RTT 18-week wait standard statistics) <https://www.publichealthscotland.scot/publications/nhs-waiting-times-18-weeks-referral-to-treatment/nhs-waiting-times-18-weeks-referral-to-treatment-quarter-ending-30-september-2022/>.

I also wanted to offer some more clarification on this request. I've had some questions from other bodies I sent a similar request to, and so I think that by spelling out what it is I want to be able to see from the requested data, I will be able to avoid any potential misinterpretations of my wording.

I have used the word pathway. I would describe this as follows. Pathway starts when a patient is referred for consultant-led treatment. Clock has started in terms of measuring waiting times. Pathway ends when patient leaves the waiting list. Clock has stopped in terms of waiting times. I know leaving the waiting list could be because of a range of scenarios - the patient has had the scan/procedure/appointment they were waiting for, they have refused treatment, they have failed to show up and therefore been removed from the waiting list etc. When I talk about a pathway ending, I am therefore looking to capture people who were on the list and are now no longer on the list, for whatever reason. However I am also wanting to find out specifically how many times this happens due to a) death, or b) because of an emergency admission meaning the patient is treated for the condition they were referred for.

A patient could be subject to multiple different referrals, which is why I chose to use the term 'pathway' rather than ask about individual patients. If a person dies while on

three waiting lists for instance, I would like them to be counted as three referral waiting periods (pathways) ending due to death.

Furthermore, the answer to question 2 and question 3 should be a subset of question 1. Essentially I would like to be able to say that in a given month, X patients left the waiting list (although individuals may be counted more than once so this isn't a count of individuals) and of these Y left because they died/had an emergency admission and were treated.

The questions could therefore be rewritten as the following:

- 1) How many patients left the waiting list for whatever reason. Please ensure people are counted more than once if they left more than one waiting list.
- 2) Of these, how many left the waiting list because they were admitted as an emergency and treated for the condition their referral related to during their emergency stay, therefore ending the treatment waiting pathway? Please ensure people are counted more than once if they left more than one waiting list.
- 3) And of these (patients in question 1), how many left the waiting list because they died? Please ensure people are counted more than once if they were on more than one waiting list when they died.

I would still like this data broken down by month for between December 2018 to January 2023.

Response

1. The total numbers of patients who left the waiting list for any reason are:

December	January to December	January to December	January to December	January to December	January
2396	35895	20327	22282	27788	2180

The breakdown by month can be found in the attached document.

2. The total numbers of the patients in question 1 who left the waiting list because they were treated after being admitted as an emergency are:

December	January to December	January to December	January to December	January to December	January
<5	59	57	56	63	<5

The breakdown by month can be found in the attached document.

3. The total numbers of the patients in question 1 who left the waiting list because they died are:

December	January to December	January to December	January to December	January to December	January
7	86	131	212	259	33

The breakdown by month can be found in the attached document.



FOI 104-23 Monthly
Breakdowns.xlsx

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.

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 **104-23** 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.