

Freedom of Information request 132-23

Request

I am writing to request information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

I am seeking information about the number of complaints received by your hospital trust in the past five years for the following specialties: neurosurgery, orthopaedic surgery, cardiothoracic surgery, and vascular surgery.

Specifically, I would like to request the following information for each specialty:

1. The total number of complaints received for each specialty in each of the past five years
2. The nature of the complaint
3. The outcome of the complaint, including any actions taken by the hospital trust to address the issue

Response

NHS Borders does not provide Neuro Surgery, Cardiothoracic Surgery or Vascular Surgery, therefore, this response will relate only to Orthopaedic Surgery.

1. The total number of complaints received is:

Year	No of Complaints relating to Orthopaedic Services
2018	104
2019	61
2020	65
2021	30
2022	49
2023 to 17 Feb	13

2. The nature of these complaints is:

Complaint Issue	Year					
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023 to 17 Feb
Admissions / transfers / discharge procedure	0	0	<5	0	0	0
Attitude and behaviour	19	15	8	<5	7	0
Bed shortages	<5	0	0	0	0	0
Clinical treatment	33	25	19	10	16	0
Communication (oral)	11	10	13	<5	5	<5
Communication (written)	7	<5	<5	<5	<5	<5
Competence	0	0	<5	0	0	0
Date for appointment	13	<5	<5	<5	<5	<5
Date of admission / attendance	17	<5	14	5	10	9
Hospital acquired infection	0	0	<5	0	0	0
NHS board purchasing	<5	0	0	0	0	0
Outpatient and other clinics	0	0	0	<5	0	0
Patient property / expenses	0	<5	<5	<5	0	0
Policy & commercial decisions of NHS board	0	0	0	0	<5	<5
Shortage / availability	0	0	0	0	<5	0
Transport	<5	0	0	0	0	0
Waiting times	0	0	0	0	<5	0

3. The outcome of the complaints is:

Year	Fully Upheld	Not Upheld	Partly Upheld	Withdrawn
2018	28	43	26	<5
2019	8	12	39	0
2020	13	26	21	<5
2021	<5	14	12	0
2022	10	21	15	0
2023 to 17 Feb	<5	8	0	0

The actions taken are:

Year	Actions
2018	Review procedures for assessing patients and booking transport for discharge.
	Ward Tissue viability link nurses have been put in place.
	Deteriorating Patient Link Nurse now identified on ward who will work with staff to provide education on completing NEWS charts.
	Review of Scaphoid Fracture Protocol and include recurrent injuries as part of the pathway that includes requesting further imaging if x-rays do not clearly show a fracture.
	A more structured plan for consultant ward rounds to be implemented.
2019	Emphasised to Physiotherapy staff that:
	Wherever possible patients with a range of movement below 80 degrees flexion should be checked by a senior physiotherapist. Failing the availability of a senior physiotherapist these patients should be discussed with the wider multi-disciplinary team, which includes the Arthroscopy Practitioner, Senior Charge Nurse/ Charge Nurse or Consultant as appropriate before the discharge progresses.
	If a patient is to be discharge home with a range of movement below 80 degrees flexion they should be assessed by an Occupational Therapists to identify whether specific equipment is required to enable a safe discharge.
2020	In future when a child's fracture is to be manipulated 10 days post injury, this should be discussed with the Surgeon who is likely to perform the surgery prior to admission to ensure no conflict of opinion would occur.
2021	Clinical Nurse Manager (CNM) to work with the team to ensure that all patients have their weight and height recorded on admission. CNM will work with the wards Fluid and Nutrition (FFN) link nurse to carry out training for all levels of ward staff.
	Copy of the nursing transfer letter to be kept in patients' healthcare records.
	CNM and the Tissue Viability link nurse to implement education within the ward team to ensure skin care is carried in line with the SSKIN and Waterlow score.
2022	Arrange training for nursing staff to support patients post-operatively when physiotherapy is not considered necessary by medical staff
	Ward looking at reintroducing Mealtime Volunteers to support patients at meal times.
2023	None identified to 17 Feb

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 **132-23** 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.