

30 October 2023

## Freedom of Information request 641-23

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### Request

I am writing to make a formal request under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002, for information held by your Trust about the food production methods and catering procedures employed within the Trust's healthcare facilities.

For the purposes of clarity, I am referring to food that is prepared for, or otherwise supplied to patients by the Trust. This would likely, predominantly, be food supplied to in-patients; but it may well also include any restaurants supplied by your catering department (e.g., Aroma Coffee Houses, or cafés, where supplied).

#### ## Food Production Methods:

RFI 1: Does the Trust produce food for patients in-house? If so, please clarify whether this is carried out on a central site (e.g., central production unit), or within each individual hospital. If there is a mixture of both, please clarify, where possible.

RFI 2: If food is not produced in-house, please provide details on whether it is produced by a third-party facilities contractor (e.g., under a PFI agreement), or purchased from external sources, in frozen (or chilled) format.

Where possible, for RFI 1 and 2, please also clarify the arrangements for delivery-to-patient (e.g., is the food supplied to wards and then reheated on-site, or is some other reheating method used).

RFI 3: For in-patient meals, what is the average cost per meal, to the Trust?

#### ## Recipe and Cooking Method Information:

RFI 4: In the event that the Trust produces food in-house, please supply a copy of the recipes, and cooking / preparation methods utilised by the catering department for standardised food items. I would imagine that this information would be readily available, owing to standardisation of menu items [1].

This would include information on ingredients, preparation steps, cooking temperatures, and any relevant nutritional considerations (e.g., it might be noted on menus that certain items are suitable for those on restricted diets, or that some menu items have specific allergens).

RFI 5: If you do not produce food in-house, please confirm whether you hold standardised information as to what items are available (e.g., menus, and nutritional / allergen information), and supply a copy, where possible.

I would hope that the bulk of this information is readily available, given the standardised nature of hospital catering services; however, if it is likely that a "costs" issue will come into play, I would be happy, in the first instance, to limit my request solely to your in-patient facilities (e.g. excluding any retail / staff catering offer).

[1] In line with the Scottish Government's National Catering and Nutrition specification for Food and Fluid provision:

<https://www.nss.nhs.scot/media/1097/1479818118-food-in-hospitals-revised-march-2016.pdf>

### Response

1. NHS Borders does produce food for patients on site for 3 sites:

- Borders General Hospital – cooked from fresh on site and delivered to patients as plated meals.
- Haylodge Hospital - cooked from fresh on site and delivered frozen from BGH to be reheated on site - delivered to patients as plated meals.
- Knoll Hospital - cooked from fresh on site and delivered frozen from BGH to be reheated on site - delivered to patients as plated meals.
- Hawick Community Hospital - cooked from fresh and delivered to patients as plated meals.
- Kelso Community Hospital - cooked from fresh and delivered to patients as plated meals.

2. N/A

3. Based on financial data for 2022/23, Health Facilities Scotland benchmarking data shows the average cost per meal for NHS Borders in-patients is £5.23.
4. Clarification not received. Therefore, the Board calculates that the work required to provide the information 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, of the Act, we are not obliged to provide you with the information.
5. Clarification not received. Therefore, the Board calculates that the work required to provide the information 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, of the Act, we are not obliged to provide you with the information.

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, Education Centre, Borders General Hospital, Melrose, TD6 9BD 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 **641-23** 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.