

6 October 2023

Freedom of Information request 699-23

Request

I am writing to you under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 to request information on the commissioning of ear wax removal services by Borders Health Board. Please may you provide me with answers to the questions below.

1. Does the Health Board currently commission an ear wax removal service or services within primary care or community ear care services, available to all adult patients registered with GP practices within the Health Board's boundary, as recommended in NICE guidance?
2. If it does, how can a patient access this service or services when it is considered clinically necessary and/or self-care advice, if appropriate, has been unsuccessful?
3. If the Health Board does commission this service or services within primary care or community ear care services, please provide the name or names of those commissioned providers.
4. Does the Health Board have a policy or guidance on ear wax removal and/or referral pathways for its primary care providers for patients for whom the benefit of ear wax removal is clinically indicated?
5. If the Health Board has issued such guidance, please provide a copy.

Response

1. Ear wax removal services is provided either by primary care or in health board run treatment rooms. This service is available to all adult patients registered with GP practices within the Health Board's boundary, as recommended in National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidance. As part of the Primary Care Improvement Plan a new Community Treatment and care service is being developed. This service will be responsible for ear care and ear wax removal in the future.
2. Access to these services is via a GP appointment and referral.
3. Ear wax removal services is provided by the health board and GP practices.
4. NHS Borders has an ear care protocol and training for staff. This includes a patient information leaflet. This has recently been reviewed and updated.
5. Please find attached a copy of the guidance issued by NHS Borders:



FOI 699-23 Ear Care
Protocol & Guidance_

Please note this document has been redacted to remove any staff names under Section 38(2) of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002.

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 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 **699-23** 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.