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Date 30/04/2025  
Your Ref  
Our Ref 9957

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Dear Mr Kelly

## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION – PATIENT TRANSPORT

I write in response to your request for information in relation to patient transport.

### Question:

1. Since the legislation was legally commenced on 1 October 2023, how has NHS Lothian paid due regard to community benefit in non-emergency patient contracts, and the extent to which such contracts will improve economic, social or environmental well-being, to comply with its duty under Part 10, Section 120 of the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019?

### Answer:

Since 1 October 2023, NHS Lothian has reviewed its non-emergency patient transport contracts to ensure they include clear community benefit outcomes, including emission reduction targets, support for local employment, and social inclusion initiatives, with all elements being considered throughout procurement, tendering and assessment of impact. The FNC continues to make available a fleet of non-emergency patient transport buses, taxis, voluntary drivers, and a range of SAS vehicle options for patient discharge.

### Question:

2. Since the legislation was legally commenced on 1 October 2023, how has NHS Lothian worked with bodies which provide community transport services in its area in providing non-emergency patient transport services to comply with its duty under Part 10, Section 121, Subsection 1 of the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019?

### Answer:

NHS Lothian has actively engaged with community transport providers across the region to support the delivery of non-emergency patient transport, exploring opportunities for service integration to enhance accessibility and patient experience. The FNC continues to provide a range of options for patient discharge transport where applicable, including a fleet of non-ambulatory buses, taxis, and voluntary driver service and the range of options available through SAS. These options complement the public transport options available to local communities.

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Chair Professor John Connaghan CBE  
Chief Executive Professor Caroline Hiscox  
*Lothian NHS Board is the common name of Lothian Health Board*

Question:

3. Since the legislation was legally commenced on 1 October 2023, how has NHS Lothian reported on:
- The steps it has taken to comply with these duties under the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019.
  - The extent to which non-emergency patient transport services in its area have been effective and cost-effective.
  - Further action it proposes to take to comply with these duties?

Answer:

a.	Response - NHS Lothian has begun integrating the requirements of Sections 120 and 121 into its broader transport and sustainability planning framework. Reporting channels include board papers, transport service reviews, and procurement monitoring, demonstrating due regard to the Act's emphasis on improving social and environmental well-being.
b.	Response - Evaluations of non-emergency transport services have identified strengths in maintaining access to care for vulnerable groups, highlighting the ongoing need for scheduling and cost management efficiencies. NHS Lothian continues to monitor performance indicators, including missed appointments, cost-per-journey, and carbon output.
c.	Looking ahead, NHS Lothian intends to expand partnerships with local community transport services, adopt greener transport options where feasible, and strengthen data collection and reporting to support future compliance and continuous improvement in patient experience and value for money.

Question:

4. In each of the last 5 years, how much did NHS Lothian spend on non-emergency patient transport?

Answer:

Unfortunately, we cannot provide 5 years' worth of data regarding the various non-emergency patient transport. Please see the following figures. We can provide -

Total Approximate Spend	
Bus Fleet (5 years)	£1,714,073
Taxis (5 years)	£ 3,655,572
Private Ambulance (4 years)	£ 532,888

Question:

5. In each of the last 5 years, how much did NHS Lothian spend with non-profit organisations which provide community transport services on non-emergency patient transport?

Answer:

We do not have this information available.

I hope the information provided helps with your request.

If you are unhappy with our response to your request, you do have the right to request us to review it. Your request should be made within 40 working days of receipt of this letter, and we will reply within 20 working days of receipt. If our decision is unchanged following a review and you remain dissatisfied with this, you then have the right to make a formal complaint to the Scottish Information Commissioner within 6 months of receipt of our review response. You can do this by using the Scottish Information Commissioner's Office online appeals service at [www.itspublicknowledge.info/Appeal](http://www.itspublicknowledge.info/Appeal). If you remain dissatisfied with the Commissioner's response you then have the option to appeal to the Court of Session on a point of law.

If you require a review of our decision to be carried out, please write to the FOI Reviewer at the email address at the head of this letter. The review will be undertaken by a Reviewer who was not involved in the original decision-making process.

FOI responses (subject to redaction of personal information) may appear on NHS Lothian's Freedom of Information website at: <https://org.nhsllothian.scot/FOI/Pages/default.aspx>

Yours sincerely

**ALISON MACDONALD**  
**Executive Director, Nursing**  
Cc: Chief Executive