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By email: [REDACTED]

Date 19th March 2025
Your Ref FOI-2025-000076
Our Ref FOI-2025-000076

Enquiries to [REDACTED]
Email nss.foi@nhs.scot

Dear [REDACTED],

Freedom of Information Request Reference: FOI-2025-000076

I refer to your request of 6th February 2025 under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 (FOISA) in relation to the following:

1. The number of breast screening appointments that were unattended/not attended in 2024.

if possible please distinguish between appointments that were eventually rescheduled and attended and ones that were not.
2. The number of women who currently have not had a breast screening appointment despite being offered it
 - (i) twice (twice in last six years)
 - (ii) thrice (three times in last 9 years)

In other words people who have been offered it multiple times but haven't attended.

3. How many women over the age of 71 made a self-referral for breast screening in last three years broken down calendar year (2022, 2023, 2024).
4. How many self-referrals were approved and how many were rejected in last three years broken down by calendar year (2022, 2023, 2024)

After a search of our electronic and paper records I can confirm that under [Section 17\(1\) of FOISA](#) NHS National Services Scotland (NSS) does not hold the information that you have requested.

It is important to note that NSS is not NHSScotland, and we do not hold information on behalf of the other Health Boards within NHSScotland. NSS is a Special Board within NHSScotland, and we have no hospitals or GP practices under our control and do not provide clinical or patient services within our Health Board. NSS are responsible for supplying essential services to the rest of the NHS in Scotland including legal services, procurement, and blood transfusion.

1. **The number of breast screening appointments that were unattended/not attended in 2024.**

if possible please distinguish between appointments that were eventually rescheduled and attended and ones that were not.



Chair Keith Redpath
Chief Executive Mary Morgan

NHS National Services Scotland is the common name of the Common Services Agency for the Scottish Health Service.

Under FOISA Section 17(1) for “Information Not Held” NSS does not hold this information. The 6 NHS Boards commissioned to provide the breast screening programme across Scotland (NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde, NHS Lothian, NHS Tayside, NHS Grampian, NHS Highland and NHS Ayrshire and Arran) may be able to provide this information.

In order to obtain the information you have requested we suggest that you make your request with the 6 afore mentioned Health Boards directly using the email addresses listed below, as under the terms of FOISA we are unable to transfer this request on your behalf.

ORGANISATION	FREEDOM OF INFORMATION TEAM
NHS Ayrshire & Arran	foi@aapct.scot.nhs.uk
NHS Grampian	gram.foi@nhs.scot
NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde	foi@ggc.scot.nhs.uk
NHS Highland	nhsh.foirequestshighland@nhs.scot
NHS Lothian	loth.freedomofinformation@nhs.scot
NHS Tayside	tay.foisa@nhs.scot

Public Health Scotland have published the latest data for the Scottish Breast Screening Programme which is available here:

[Scottish breast screening programme statistics - Annual update to 31 March 2023 - Scottish breast screening programme statistics - Publications - Public Health Scotland](#)

The 2023/24 publication is anticipated Summer 2025.

However the routine datasets that inform these national statistical publications does not detail appointments that were not attended and some people cannot attend (or cancel/rearrange) appointments but then attend at a later date. The final uptake figures will therefore mask a number of non-attendances where the participant did attend later.

2. The number of women who currently have not had a breast screening appointment despite being offered it

- (i) twice (twice in last six years)
- (ii) thrice (three times in last 9 years)

In other words people who have been offered it multiple times but haven't attended.

In line with the [Scottish Information Commissioner's Exemption Briefing for Section 17\(1\) for "Information Not Held" paragraphs 46 and 47 \(page 6\)](#) NSS does hold this information but is not in a readily accessible state within the national breast screening IT system as this data is not routinely collected. In order for NSS to provide an answer to this question new information would need to be created from different datasets. NSS have judged that the creation of this new data would require skill and complex judgement and is therefore exempt from release under the exemption.

Public Health Scotland have published the 1 and 3 yearly programme data on their website: [Scottish breast screening programme statistics - Annual update to 31 March 2023 - Scottish breast screening programme statistics - Publications - Public Health Scotland](#)

3. How many women over the age of 71 made a self-referral for breast screening in last three years broken down calendar year (2022, 2023, 2024).

Under FOISA Section 17(1) for “Information Not Held” NSS does not hold this information.

In order to obtain the information you have requested we suggest that you make your request with the 6 afore mentioned Health Boards directly using the email addresses listed below, as under the terms of FOISA we are unable to transfer this request on your behalf.

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NHS Highland	nhsh.foirequestshighland@nhs.scot
NHS Lothian	loth.freedomofinformation@nhs.scot
NHS Tayside	tay.foisa@nhs.scot

4. How many self-referrals were approved and how many were rejected in last three years broken down by calendar year (2022, 2023, 2024)

The Scottish Breast Screening Programme paused self-referrals in 2020 to support the re-instatement and recovery of the programme following the Covid-19 pandemic. A phased re-introduction of self-referrals commenced from November 2022 with full extension to include those over 75 with no previous history of breast cancer across Scotland from December 2023. This was a planned phased re-introduction of self-referrals and as such no clients were rejected.

Under FOISA Section 17(1) for "Information Not Held" NSS does not hold the number of self-referrals that were approved and screened. This information may be available from the six NHS Boards commissioned to provide the breast screening programme.

ORGANISATION	FREEDOM OF INFORMATION TEAM
NHS Ayrshire & Arran	foi@aapct.scot.nhs.uk
NHS Grampian	gram.foi@nhs.scot
NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde	foi@ggc.scot.nhs.uk
NHS Highland	nhsh.foirequestshighland@nhs.scot
NHS Lothian	loth.freedomofinformation@nhs.scot
NHS Tayside	tay.foisa@nhs.scot

If you are unhappy with any aspect of how we have dealt with your request, you can make representations to us asking us to review the handling of your request. Please write to the Associate Director Governance & Board Services using the email address nss.foi@nhs.scot within 40 working days of the date of this correspondence.

If after a review you are still unhappy, you also have the right to apply to the Scottish Information Commissioner, who can be contacted at Kinburn Castle, St Andrews, Fife, KY16 9DS, or via their online Appeal form.

