

Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002

Date received	22/08/2022	Subject	Missed Appointments		
Passed to	Information Services	Date passed	23/08/2022	Respond by	12/09/2022
Category	Scottish Parliament		FOI number	2022-336	

Question/s to be answered

Please note I am referring to missed appointments not cancelled appointments. I am defining a missed appointment as below:

'Where a patient fails to turn up for a pre-arranged appointment without having warned the relevant healthcare setting that they would not be attending.'

1. In this health board, how many missed appointments have been recorded during the 2022 calendar year? Please also provide the data for the 2021, 2020, 2018 and 2017 calendar years. Where a missed appointment has been recorded, please outline where the appointment had been due to take place, for example at a hospital or GP practice. Please express the number of missed appointments in both numerical terms and as a percentage of the total number of appointments.

The table provided in your original request lists all territorial health boards in Scotland. We have therefore assumed that data is being requested to make comparisons between boards. The most appropriate data sets for such comparisons are published by Public Health Scotland (PHS). PHS gathers raw appointment information from all boards and processes it (e.g. for quality assurance purposes) before publication.

Information on outpatient activity split by including DNAs is published here:

<https://www.opendata.nhs.scot/dataset/outpatient-activity/resource/480d4317-20ed-44f0-9ca5-f7a866b2ee2d>

The code Z102H can be used to limit the results above to the Gilbert Bain Hospital, NHS Shetland's only hospital.

Based on this interpretation of your question and in accordance with FOISA s 17(1), NHS Shetland confirms that it does not hold the information requested.

Please note:

- The data for 2022 is still being processed and an updated PHS publication is scheduled for 27 September.
- The raw data on GP appointment activity does not contain information on missed appointments and so the breakdown requested cannot be provided

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2. In this health board, please provide the cost of each missed appointment in a) a hospital setting and b) a GP practice. To exemplify my request, each GP appointment costs NHS England approximately £30, while NHS Borders said in 2015 that a single missed appointment cost in the region of £100.

In accordance with FOISA s 17(1), NHS Shetland confirms that it does not hold the information requested.

The methodology the NHS uses for costing of services only includes episode care for activity that **did** occur.

Missed appointments are not routinely included in the activity base when the average cost of the service is calculated.

As a result, figures often quoted about the cost of missed appointments are potentially misleading for the following reason:

1. Any cost the NHS body may have incurred from the missed appointments are already effectively included in the cost of the average appointment
2. The average cost of appointments, often quoted, are not the potential direct marginal cost of the appointment missed.
3. The average cost includes fixed costs that will be incurred irrespective of whether the appointment occurred, e.g. Property expenses such as Non-domestic Rates.
4. The direct costs inputs (such as staff time) are different for each speciality, due to factors such as the length of appointment, number and grade of staff involved in the planned appointment, and the complexity of the patient's condition.
5. Staff will likely use the time allotted to the appointment to undertake other tasks or duties.

Missed appointments primarily hinder access to NHS services, as someone was unable to use that slot for their care needs. Also, should a follow-up appointment need to be scheduled for an individual who did not attend then that is a second appointment unavailable to someone else.

In respect of the average costs often quoted for NHS Scotland, these are published for each board at speciality level and available to access on Public Health Scotland website in the [Scottish Health service cost](#) section. This contains the 'Cost Book'. General enquiries relating to these reports can be made to phs.costsinfo@phs.scot.