



12 October 2023

Email:

Dear

**FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST**

**Request No:** 7940-23  
**Subject:** Private/Independent Ambulance Service  
**Date Received:** 10/03/2023  
**Date of Monitoring:** 04/09/2023

Thank you for your request for information received on 10 March 2023 which was dealt with under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Northern Ireland Ambulance Service (NIAS) Health and Social Care Trust has now completed its search for the information you requested and that is detailed below. The Trust would fully apologise for the delay in the provision of a response.

**Question 1**

Would it be possible to get a complete breakdown of how much it has cost/expenditure for the private/independent ambulance service for the last 3 years?

**Response 1**

Please see the attached excel file FOI07940-23-3 years IAP expenditure. These figures represent information contained within the Trust's General Ledger System and actual payments to suppliers may be different from the reporting month (Month 1&2 represent April and May and are combined as a result of the production of final accounts at this time).

**Question 2**

Can it be broke down even further to a month by month cost for the last 3 years?

**Response 2**

Please see the response to Question 1.

**Question 3**

How much each private/independent ambulance service has been paid for the service they provided? **Response 3**

Please see the response to Question 1.

#### **Question 4**

Was it value for money?

Northern Ireland Ambulance Service Health & Social Care Trust  
Headquarters, Site 30 Knockbracken Healthcare Park, Saintfield Road, Belfast BT8 8SG

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#### **Response 4**

Value for money is a subjective term with a number of definitions. However, Private/Independent ambulance contractors are engaged through a regional framework contract derived from a competitive tendering process administered by the Business Services Organisation (BSO) Procurement and Logistics Service (PaLS). Suppliers are engaged on the basis of a call off protocol that considers geographical area and lowest cost provider on the framework.

#### **Question 5**

How many vehicles they provided, for NEAC and EAC?

#### **Response 5**

Please see attached file IAS Numbers for FOI June 2023 which provides an estimate of the average number of IAS used each month taken from snap shot counts over three years of EAC and NEAC IAS numbers. It indicates a monthly average of 873 IAS crews utilised each month for the last three years. This is an approximate figure as this information is not routinely collected in an easily summarised form due to the manual nature of IAS provision.

#### **Question 6**

What was the skill mix of staff on those vehicles provided to cover NEAC and EAC?

#### **Response 6**

The IAS procurement framework currently lists the following as suitable qualifications for IAS ambulance crews and thus illustrates the skill mix on IAS ambulances:

The Contractor's drivers and attendants must be fully trained and be able to maintain their competency to a standard that would be equivalent to that of NIAS Ambulance Care Attendants, who are trained to Edexcel Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) Level 2 First Person On Scene (FPOS) Award or First Responder Emergency Care (FREC) 3 or equivalent to the current NIAS ambulance care attendant training throughout the period of the Contract. This includes training in first aid level, which includes:

- a) Basic Life Support with Bag-Valve-Mask (BVM) including Adult & Child cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR)
- b) Defibrillation using an automated defibrillator
- c) Airway Management & Oxygen therapy
- d) Patient Assessment
- e) Moving and handling including the moving of bariatric patients
- f) Infection and Prevention Control
- g) Treatment of patients with infectious diseases and conditions
- h) Equality and Diversity
- i) Communications Skills
- j) Management of Aggression
- k) Adult Safeguarding
- l) Child Safeguarding

- m) Consent
- n) Confidentiality
- o) Risk Assessment and management
- p) Moving and Handling people

16.3 The Contractor's drivers of the non-emergency ambulances must hold a full and valid driving licence with the vehicle classifications required to drive the ambulance.

16.23 The Contractor, if providing non-emergency patient transport with a Healthcare Professional must provide as a minimum a qualified Paramedic or Nurse as part of the vehicle crew, who must be registered with the appropriate professional body and trained in Advanced Life Support (ALS).

I hope the above and attached fully assists you.

Please note that, under the Re-use of Public Sector Information Regulations, if you wish to publish or otherwise use this information besides for your own means, you will need to seek our permission to do so.

If you are dissatisfied in any way with the handling of your request, you have the right to request a review. You should do this as soon as possible, or in any case within two months of the date of issue of this letter.

In the event that you require a review to be undertaken, you can do so by writing to the Director of Planning, Performance and Corporate Services, Northern Ireland Ambulance Service (NIAS) HSC Trust, Site 30, Knockbracken Healthcare Park, Saintfield Road, Belfast, BT8 8SG.

If following an internal review, carried out by an independent decision maker, you remain dissatisfied in any way with the handling of the request, you may make a complaint under Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act, to the Information Commissioner's Office and ask that they investigate whether the Trust has complied with the terms of the Freedom of Information Act.

You can write to the Information Commissioner at:

**Website:** [ni@ico.org.uk](mailto:ni@ico.org.uk)

**Post:** Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow,  
CHESHIRE SK9 5AF

**Telephone:** 028 9027 8757 or 0303 123 1114 (Belfast based Office)

In most circumstances the Information Commissioner will not investigate a complaint unless an internal review procedure has been carried out. However the Commissioner has the option to investigate the matter at his discretion.

Please be advised that NIAS replies under Freedom of Information may be released into the public domain via our website @ <http://www.niamb.co.uk>.

Personal details in respect of your request will have, where applicable, been removed to protect confidentiality.

Yours sincerely

*(not signed – issued by email)*

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**Information Governance  
Team**