



23 July 2025

Email:

Dear

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST

Request No: 40712-25
Subject: Mask Fit Testing services
Date Received: 19/05/2025
Date of Monitoring: 20/05/2025

Thank you for your request for information received on 19th May 2025 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.

FOI QUESTION(S)	ANSWER(S)
<p>I am looking for information relating to Mask Fit Testing services provided to the NI Trust's from the years 2019 to current provided by Fittest.ie/AMON Electronics.</p> <p>I wish to know the value of spend to the various Trust's:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Northern Ireland Ambulance Service HSC Trust. 	<p>Please refer to the response provided below.</p>

The Public Interest Test

Refusal Notice – (Section 43(2) Commercial Interest)

I can confirm that NIAS holds the information relevant to your request for the question above. However this information is exempt under Section 43(2) Commercial Interest of the Freedom of Information Act. With Section 43(2) being a prejudice based qualified exemption there is a requirement to articulate the harm that would be caused in releasing the information into the public domain.

In determining whether or not the public interest in withholding information outweighs the public interest disclosing information, NIAS considered the factors favouring disclosure and the factors against disclosure. The application of the Public Interest Test is set out below.



Exemption claimed in respect of Section 43(2) Commercial Interest	
Considerations in Favour of Disclosing	Considerations in Favour of Not Disclosing
<p>Expenditure of public money requires openness, transparency and accountability.</p> <p>Disclosing information could feasibly aid the public in understanding the expenditure of public money for the receiver purpose.</p>	<p>The disclosure of the individual rates of pay provided by NIAS to the private ambulance provider/company may prejudice the provider commercial interests as it would enable a member of the public or other companies to have a significant advantage in a similar procurement process.</p>
<p>Promoting competition for public sector procurement processes. There is public interest in ensuring that there is competition for public sector procurement processes. Releasing information about rates may encourage more potential suppliers to enter the market. This could lead to improved numbers entering a procurement process.</p>	<p>Deter competition for a procurement process. There is a public interest in ensuring provider/companies can compete and there is fair competition. Disclosure of individual rates paid may prejudice this. Disclosure may restrict the number of providers willing to work with the public sector for fear of losing a competitive advantage if their pricing structures/costs are released to the wider public. This also has the potential to compromise the ability to achieve value for money for future procurement process.</p>
	<p>The rates of pay are unique to each private ambulance provider/company and remains commercially sensitive, as it may be used in other similar procurement processes.</p>

Balancing Test:

NIAS, like any public service, has a duty to ensure the most appropriate and effective use of resources. Disclosure of the requested information could potentially jeopardise any future procurement process for the type of system to which the request pertains by deterring competition and/or giving a supplier(s) an unfair advantage. This could negatively impact the outcome of any future procurement exercise in terms of delivering value for money for the public purse.

We have therefore concluded that the exemption applies and that withholding the material serves the public interest better than release in this instance.

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:

Email: ni@ico.org.uk
Website: [ICO Website](#)
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 @ <https://nias.hscni.net> Personal details in respect of your request will have, where applicable, been removed to protect confidentiality.

Yours sincerely

(not signed – issued by email)

Information Governance Team