



13 June 2025

Email:

Dear

**FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST**

**Request No:** 36161-25  
**Subject:** NIAS Ambulance Number / Private Ambulance  
**Date Received:** 05/02/2025

Thank you for your request for information received on 5 February 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.

The Trust would apologise for the delay in the provision of a response. The below response has been provided by the Trust's Operations and Finance Directorate.

FOI QUESTION(S)	ANSWER(S)
<p>1. How many NIAS ambulances are available in NI? Can you show the number available for each of the past five years?</p> <p>Applicant has confirmed that the request relates to number of vehicles so has been passed to Fleet for response.</p> <p>The applicant has indicated that it would be useful to have some supplementary information detailing the number of ambulance crews that are planned to be on duty.</p>	<p>On a daily basis across Northern Ireland, there are 64 emergency ambulances available.</p> <p>On a daily basis across Northern Ireland, NIAS plan regionally for 84 patient care service vehicles each day.</p> <p>Please see attached table entitled 2025_01_31_Summary of DCA Cover by Division (DCA=Double Crew Ambulance) relating to planned cover.</p> <p>Information regarding number of ambulances that are operational will be provided as soon as possible.</p>
<p>2. In what circumstances do health trusts have to make use of private ambulances?</p>	<p>NIAS management teams review ambulance cover levels on a daily basis and work ahead to address any shortfalls in planned cover through the use of overtime and provision of extra ambulance providers under a well-established regional framework.</p> <p>These private providers are typically dispatched to lower priority and non-urgent</p>



	calls allowing NIAS emergency vehicles to be focused on higher acuity emergencies and ambulance crews commencing shift in any given station are dynamically deployed across operational boundaries to cover gaps in provision.												
3. Can the department/Trusts outline the number of private ambulances being used in Northern Ireland over the past five calendar years?	Private ambulances have been used in 69,736 times in the past five calendar years across Northern Ireland.												
4. Can you break that down to show the numbers used annually for each year?	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>FY</th> <th>TOTAL</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2020-21</td> <td>14,753</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2021-22</td> <td>12,783</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2022-23</td> <td>13,003</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2023-24</td> <td>11,812</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2024-25</td> <td>17,385</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	FY	TOTAL	2020-21	14,753	2021-22	12,783	2022-23	13,003	2023-24	11,812	2024-25	17,385
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5. Furthermore, can you show much was spent on private ambulances for each year, showing the cost per Trust and the overall NI-wide cost?	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>FY</th> <th>£</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2020-21</td> <td>10,145,690</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2021-22</td> <td>9,735,649</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2022-23</td> <td>9,234,546</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2023-24</td> <td>7,377,932</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2024-25</td> <td>10,398,045</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	FY	£	2020-21	10,145,690	2021-22	9,735,649	2022-23	9,234,546	2023-24	7,377,932	2024-25	10,398,045
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I hope the above is of assistance to 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:

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

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**Information Governance Team**

*This response has been prepared for disclosure log publication. Only minor editorial or redaction amendments have been made for clarity and compliance with data protection legislation. The substantive content is identical to that provided to the requestor and the original issued version remains the authoritative record.*