



12 February 2026

Email:

Dear

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST

Request No: 45986-26

Subject: Spiking

Date Received: 08/01/2026

Thank you for your request for information received on 8th January 2026 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)

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, I would like to request the following information that your organisation may hold regarding incidents of spiking:

1. The number of recorded incidents of suspected spiking cases from October 2021 – September 2025, broken down by month where possible.
2. Where available, provide a breakdown of the information, such as grouped data or percentages:
 1. **Type of spiking methods** – needling, drink spiking, food spiking, vape spiking and any other means
 2. **Gender** – Male, Female, Non-binary, Not disclosed, Other
 3. **Age group** of individuals at the time of alleged spiking –
 - below 18
 - 18 to 24
 - 25 to 34
 - 35 to 44
 - 45 and above
 4. **Setting/location type** where spiking took place (bar, nightclub, private residence, university accommodation, others)

3. Copies of or link to any **guidance, protocols, or policies** your organisation has for responding to suspected spiking incidents.

ANSWER(S)

1 and 2.

We do hold some of the requested information. However, we will not be complying with your request to provide this information as from our preliminary assessment, we estimate that compliance with your request would exceed the appropriate cost limit.



Section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) makes clear that as a public authority Northern Ireland Ambulance Service (NIAS) Health and Social Care Trust is not obliged to comply with an FOIA request if the authority estimates that the cost of complying with the request would exceed the 'appropriate limit'. The 'appropriate limit' for NIAS as determined in the 'Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004' is £450. We have determined that £450 would equate to 18 hours work.

Your request exceeds this cost limit because the information you have requested is not held in an automatic reportable format and requires a manual interrogation of each of the individual records.

It requires NIAS to run a search of free text fields using keywords that you have specified which is very likely to return information in a false positive way that would not be attributed to the spiking method above.

If we use the type of methods that you have requested, it will not be possible to manually check all the information and therefore we deem that the cost of compliance with your request exceeds the amount which we are legally obliged to respond to.

We would have to look at each record over the requested timeframe to determine whether those records contain the information that you have requested. We estimate that would equate to over well over 200 hours' worth of searching, sifting, and reviewing for the detailed information you require.

Therefore, to review all of the information and the records containing the information would require considerably more than 18 hours which, charged at the statutory rate of £25 per hour would exceed the £450 cost limit. It is for this reason, and in accordance with section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act, that we are not obliged to comply with your request for information. This letter acts as a Refusal Notice in respect of this request.

However, if you are able to reform your request for example, timeframe, content etc then we may be able to conduct further searches to provide the information you seek.

3. NIAS do not carry any medicines that would reverse the drugs that are usually used for spiking therefore no policy exists.

I hope the above 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.

If you require an internal review to be undertaken, please request this via the email address: information.governance@nias.hscni.net

Or submit via

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, 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)

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

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.