



14 May 2026

Email:

Dear

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST

Request No: 47576-26

Subject: Mental Health & Wellbeing Support Services and Occupational Health Services

Date Received: 20/04/2026

Thank you for your request for information received on 20 April 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)	ANSWER(S)
Part A – Mental Health & Wellbeing Support Services	
1. Please confirm whether NIAS currently operates under a contract or service level agreement with an external provider for mental health and wellbeing support services, whether such services are delivered in-house, or whether a hybrid model is in place. <i>The remaining questions proceed on the assumption that an external third-party provider is engaged.</i>	NIAS use the following providers: Lena (Inspire) Employee Assistance Programme and High intensity therapy service. Service Level Agreement (SLA) with Belfast Health and Social Care Trust (BHSCT) for Occupational Health.
2. Please identify the organisation that currently holds the contract for the provision of these services.	Belfast Health and Social Care Trust (BHSCT).
3. Please state when the service was most recently tendered and the duration of the contract awarded at that time.	<u>Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)</u> Service for the NI Public Sector provided by Inspire through DoF – NICSHR contract. NIAS includes High Intensity Counselling Service. Date tendered: 01 November 2025 Duration of Contract: 3 year contract. <u>BHSCT OH service</u> Date tendered: 01 October 2025 Duration of contract: Oct 2025 - July 2028



FOI QUESTION(S) contd.	ANSWER(S)
4. Please indicate when the service is next scheduled for retendering.	EAP service NI Public Sector contract ongoing. OH service July 2028
5. Please confirm whether the contracted service provides: (a) general mental health and wellbeing support only; or (b) both general mental health and wellbeing support and specialist support following serious or critical incidents involving frontline personnel.	EAP service provides general mental health and wellbeing support; EAP operate a trauma triage system to identify when a colleague will benefit from specialist high intensity support that includes following serious or critical incidents impact. NIAS has a full time Critical Incident Stress Management service and team in place internally that provide post incident mental health and wellbeing support and onward referral to specialist services. OH service provides both also.
6. For the most recent year for which statistics are available (e.g., 2024–2025), please provide: - the number of occasions on which mental health and wellbeing interventions were required; and - the total number of counselling days or sessions delivered across all categories of support.	NIAS does not hold information in the format requested. Usage of EAP service, high intensity service and OH usage is recorded under broad support categories. Please confirm if you wish to receive information NIAS hold.
7. For the same reporting year, please provide a breakdown of counselling days or sessions -either numerically or in percentage terms - between: - general mental health and wellbeing support; and - specialist serious/critical incident counselling.	Same as above.
8. Please confirm whether the service employs a combination of direct (face-to-face) and indirect (telephone or online) counselling modalities. If so, please provide the percentage split for the most recent reporting year.	Direct and in direct modalities are used and offered. High intensity support such as Eye movement desensitisation and Reprocessing (EMDR) would be face to face.

FOI QUESTION(S) contd.	ANSWER(S)
9. For the most recent reporting year, please provide the geographic distribution of counselling service usage, expressed as a percentage by county and by the Belfast and Derry/Londonderry conurbations.	The addresses of service users are not linked to the usage data therefore NIAS do not record the requested information and as per the Freedom of Information Act 2000 Section 1 FOIA only applies to information that a public authority already holds in recorded form at the time of a request. NIAS does not have to create new information to respond to your request.
10. For the same reporting year, please advise whether the counselling capacity available was sufficient to meet immediate demand, or whether waiting lists arose. If waiting lists did occur, please confirm whether they were fully cleared by year end.	OH capacity was increased to reflect demand.
Part B – Occupational Health Services	
1. Please confirm whether NIAS currently operates under a contract or service level agreement with an external provider for occupational health services, whether such services are delivered in-house, or whether a hybrid model is in place. <i>The remaining questions proceed on the assumption that an external third-party provider is engaged.</i>	SLA with BHSCT
2. Please identify the organisation that currently holds the contract for the provision of occupational health services.	BHSCT
3. Please state when the occupational health service was most recently tendered and the duration of the contract awarded at that time.	Oct 2025 tendered, duration July 2028
4. Please indicate when the service is next scheduled for retendering.	July 2028
5. Please outline the scope of the contracted occupational health service, including whether it covers: • routine health surveillance; • fitness-for-duty assessments; • return-to-work assessments; • specialist assessments relating to operational or frontline duties.	Service provides • fitness-for-duty assessments. • return-to-work assessments. • specialist assessments relating to operational or frontline duties.

FOI QUESTION(S) contd.	ANSWER(S)
6. For the most recent year for which statistics are available (e.g., 2024–2025), please provide: • the total number of occupational health referrals; • the number of fitness-for-duty assessments; • the number of return-to-work assessments; • the number of specialist or operationally-related assessments.	2024-2025 • 1530 referrals. • 1109 fitness for duty assessments. • Included in above referrals figure.
7. For the same reporting year, please provide the average and maximum waiting times for: • routine referrals; • urgent referrals; • operationally critical assessments.	2024-2025 • 15 days • 6 days • 15 days
8. Please confirm whether the contracted service provides on-site clinics, remote/telephone consultations, or a combination of both. If a combination is used, please provide the percentage split for the most recent reporting year.	All modalities used NIAS do not record the requested information and as per the Freedom of Information Act 2000 Section 1 FOIA only applies to information that a public authority already holds in recorded form at the time of a request. NIAS does not have to create new information to respond to your request.
9. For the most recent reporting year, please provide the geographic distribution of occupational health service usage, expressed as a percentage by county and by the Belfast and Derry/Londonderry conurbations.	Not reported in SLA data therefore NIAS do not record the requested information and as per the Freedom of Information Act 2000 Section 1 FOIA only applies to information that a public authority already holds in recorded form at the time of a request. NIAS does not have to create new information to respond to your request.
10. For the same reporting year, please advise whether the occupational health capacity available was sufficient to meet demand, or whether waiting lists arose. If waiting lists did occur, please confirm whether they were fully cleared by year end.	Demand increased and service was increased.

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](https://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)

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.