

Date: 28 March 2024
Our ref: K: FOI/Ref: 2024-000105
Email: nss.pcf-foi@nhs.scot

Dear [REDACTED]

Freedom of Information Reference: FOI-2024-000105 – NIPCM

I refer to your freedom of information request that we received on 29 February 2024. We have now completed the search of our records and can provide you with the following information:

- Minutes of the meetings of NIPCM working groups and oversight body prior to the withdrawal of extended guidance on mask wearing in health and social care settings in 2023 where this was discussed and the evidence-base was reviewed, including research concerning industry standards for (well-fitting) FFP3 respiratory masks in terms of their efficacy in preventing transmission of airborne aerosol infections.**

Under Section 17 of the Freedom of Information Scotland Act, 2002 (FOISA) an organisation does not have to provide that information if it does not hold that information. NHS National Services Scotland (NSS) does not hold the information requested. Antimicrobial Resistance and Healthcare Associated Infection (ARHAI) Scotland does not hold any minutes of meetings of NIPCM working groups or oversight where the withdrawal of extended guidance on mask wearing was discussed. The decision to withdraw the extended guidance on mask wearing was taken by Scottish Government and did not involve NIPCM working or oversight group. Please see the following link:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-face-masks-and-face-coverings-guidance>.

- Information on the goals, process and reporting for the exercise referred to above, concerning increasing the transparency and rigour of the NIPCM development process.**

Under Section 17 of the Freedom of Information Scotland Act, 2002 (FOISA) an organisation does not have to provide that information if it does not hold that information. NSS does not hold the information requested. The removal of extended guidance on mask wearing in health and social care settings in 2023 was not the remit of the NIPCM programme of work.

- Information on how ARHAI ensures this process is informed by experts on aerosol physics, clean air technology, different research methodologies and service user lived experience.**

Under Section 17 of the Freedom of Information Scotland Act, 2002 (FOISA) an organisation does not have to provide that information if it does not hold that information. NSS does not hold the information requested. The removal of extended guidance on mask wearing in health and social care settings in 2023 was not the remit of the NIPCM programme of work.



Chair
Chief Executive
Director

Keith Redpath
Mary Morgan
Julie Critchley

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4. Any record of discussion of the use of HEPA air filtration equipment or UVC air sterilisation equipment in relation to the development of the NIPCM.

Under Section 17 of the Freedom of Information Scotland Act, 2002 (FOISA) an organisation does not have to provide that information if it does not hold that information. NSS does not hold the information requested. The NIPCM does not contain any literature reviews in which evidence on the use of HEPA air filtration equipment or UVC air sterilisation equipment is relevant. Therefore, there has been no discussion regarding the use of these technologies in relation to development of NIPCM content.

5. Evidence, e.g. records of correspondence or discussion, concerning the integration of guidance on use of HEPA air filtration equipment or UVC air sterilisation equipment in health or social care settings into the NIPCM [Chapter 4 seems apposite], or any other action to integrate this into health and social care settings (for example:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-ventilation-guidance/pages/air-cleaning-technology/> ; or, as per NHS England, <https://www.england.nhs.uk/long-read/application-of-hepa-filter-devices-for-air-cleaning-in-healthcare-spaces-guidance-and-standards/>; <https://www.england.nhs.uk/long-read/application-of-ultraviolet-uvc-devices-for-air-cleaning-in-occupied-healthcare-spaces-guidance-and-standards/>)

Under Section 17 of the Freedom of Information Scotland Act, 2002 (FOISA) an organisation does not have to provide that information if it does not hold that information. NSS does not hold the information requested. The NIPCM does not currently contain any literature reviews in which evidence on the use of HEPA air filtration equipment or UVC air sterilisation equipment has been considered through a systematic review of the related literature. Therefore, there has been no discussion regarding the use of these technologies in relation to development of NIPCM content.

6. Information on to whom ARHAI is accountable, including the relationship between ARHAI and Scottish Government Ministers and, the mechanisms through which ARHAI can be, and has been, held democratically accountable via the Scottish Parliament.

ARHAI Scotland reports through NHS Scotland Assure Directorate Management Team who are accountable to NSS Executive Management Team into the NHS NSS Board. ARHAI Scotland also report directly to Chief Nursing Officer Directorate (CNOD) part of the Scottish Government.

7. Information on the Director, CEO (or equivalent) of ARHAI, senior team, how they are appointed and to whom they are accountable.

Please see the following link for NSS Board members [Board members | National Services Scotland \(nhs.scot\)](#) and then for NSS Executive Management Team [Executive Management Team | National Services Scotland \(nhs.scot\)](#).

I trust you will find the information of assistance and if you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.



Chair	Keith Redpath
Chief Executive	Mary Morgan
Director	Julie Critchley

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If you are unhappy with any aspect of how we have dealt with your request, you can make representations to us asking us to review the handling of your request. Please write to the

Head of Information and Cyber Security
Digital and Security
NHS National Services Scotland
Headquarters
Gyle Square
1 South Gyle Crescent
Edinburgh
EH12 9EB

or at the email address nss.foi@nhs.scot within 40 working days of the date of this correspondence.

If after a review you are still unhappy, you also have the right to apply to the Scottish Information Commissioner, who can be contacted at Kinburn Castle, St Andrews, Fife, KY16 9DS, or via their [online application form](#).

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact me at the above address.

Yours sincerely

[Redacted signature]

[Redacted contact information]



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