

Date: 12 March 2024
Our ref: K: FOI/Ref: 2024-000083
Email: nss.pcf-foi@nhs.scot

Freedom of Information Reference: FOI-2024-000083 – Masking guidance

I refer to your freedom of information request that we received on 14 February 2024 requesting the following information.

Under the Freedom of Information Act (2000) I would be grateful if you could provide me with the scientific evidence justifying the use of face coverings (including face masks) during the Covid 19 pandemic and specifically evidence relating to how the use of these face coverings prevent the spread of COVID19.

We have now completed the search of our records and can provide you with the following information:

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 any information in relation to any evidence justifying the use of face coverings during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Regarding face masks, ARHAI Scotland (Antimicrobial Resistance and Healthcare Associated Infection), a body of NSS, produced a suite of rapid literature reviews to support the infection prevention and control response to the COVID-19 pandemic in Scotland, which highlights face mask use. These rapid reviews are no longer being updated. For reference, the latest rapid review is available online at [Rapid review of the literature: Assessing the infection prevention and control measures for the prevention and management of COVID-19 in health and care settings \(scot.nhs.uk\)](https://www.scot.nhs.uk/rapid-reviews/assessing-the-infection-prevention-and-control-measures-for-the-prevention-and-management-of-covid-19-in-health-and-care-settings)

You may wish to contact the Scottish Government for information in relation face coverings at the following - [Request information - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot).

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

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



Chair
Chief Executive
Director

Keith Redpath
Mary Morgan
Julie Critchley

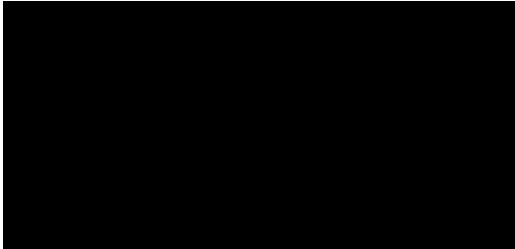
*NHS National Services Scotland is the common name of the
Common Services Agency for the Scottish Health Service*

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



Chair	Keith Redpath
Chief Executive	Mary Morgan
Director	Julie Critchley

NHS National Services Scotland is the common name of the Common Services Agency for the Scottish Health Service