

Date 13 July 2026
Your Ref FOI-2026-3394
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Enquiries to [REDACTED]
Email psd.foi@nhs.scot

Dear [REDACTED],

Freedom of Information Reference: FOI-2026-3394

I refer to your Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 (FOISA) request that we received on 15 June 2026 requesting the following information:

This request follows my previous correspondence with the Minister for Public Health and Women's Health (Ref: 202600500034) and the Chief Dental Officer's letter of 22 December 2025, in which the Scottish Government confirmed ownership of the acknowledged gap in practice-level governance for mixed NHS/private dental practices. Following the Minister's response of 30 January 2026, I am now seeking information on NHS National Services Scotland's involvement in this matter.

In responding to this request, please provide as much information as possible. Where any information is exempt from disclosure, I would be grateful if you could identify the specific exemption being relied upon and provide any non-exempt parts of the information. As the national body responsible for processing and holding all NHS General Dental Services payment and contractor activity data in Scotland, NHS National Services Scotland is uniquely placed to support practice-level oversight. The General Dental Council has described the current Scottish position in mixed NHS/private practices as a "potentially un-regulated care environment".

Following the Minister's confirmation on 30 January 2026 that this issue has been added to the Chief Dental Officer's work programme as an immediate quality-assurance matter, I am now seeking clear evidence of your involvement, including any requests to participate in reviews or working groups, any analysis or monitoring you have undertaken at practice level, and any proposals or recommendations you have made to the Scottish Government regarding improvements to data collection or governance for dental contractors.

**** Please provide the following information: ****

1. Since 1 January 2026, has NHS National Services Scotland been formally requested by the Scottish Government (or the Office of the Chief Dental Officer) to participate in any review, working group, or stakeholder engagement regarding practice-level governance of mixed NHS/private dental practices? Please answer yes or no. If yes, please provide:

Chair Mr Keith Redpath
Chief Executive Professor Karen Reid

the date(s) of the request(s), and b) the purpose or remit of the engagement.

2. Since 1 January 2026, has NHS National Services Scotland had any correspondence, meetings, or discussions with the Scottish Government (including the Chief Dental Officer or Primary Care Directorate) regarding practice-level data, complaints monitoring, or governance improvements for mixed NHS/private dental practices? Please answer yes or no. If yes, please provide a brief summary of the main issues discussed and the current status of any ongoing engagement.
3. Since 1 January 2026, has NHS National Services Scotland undertaken any specific work or analysis to identify, monitor, or assess complaints, incidents, or risks at the individual dental practice level (rather than at aggregated or contractor level)? Please answer yes or no. If yes, please provide: a) a brief description of the work undertaken, and b) the current status or main outcomes of this work.
4. Does NHS National Services Scotland currently hold, collect, or publish any data at the individual dental practice level (as opposed to aggregated or contractor-level data) that could be used to identify patterns of complaints, activity, or risk across mixed NHS/private dental practices? Please answer yes or no. If yes, please provide a brief description of the type of data held.
5. Since 1 January 2026, has any analysis been undertaken or commissioned of complaints, incidents, or patient safety concerns at the level of individual mixed NHS/private dental practices (as opposed to aggregated contractor-level data)? Please answer yes or no. If yes, please provide: a) a brief summary of the main findings, and b) any resulting actions, recommendations, or risk assessments.
6. Since 1 January 2026, has NHS National Services Scotland made any formal recommendations or proposals to the Scottish Government concerning improvements to practice-level data collection or governance for dental contractors? Please answer yes or no. If yes, please state: a) whether any such proposals were formally submitted, and b) the current status of this work. If no such proposals or record exists, please confirm this explicitly.
7. Has any indicative timetable, target date, or expected timeframe been set for resolving or significantly progressing the acknowledged gap in practice-level governance for mixed NHS/private dental practices? Please answer yes or no. If yes, please provide: a) the expected date or timeframe, and b) what the target outcome is (e.g. named accountability, patient-facing pathway, or legislative change).

**** Date range: 1 January 2026 to the date of this request. ****

I am happy to cooperate fully with this request and understand that some information may be exempt or that responding to the full request may exceed the cost limit. In such circumstances, please

Provide as much of the requested information as possible within the cost limit; and
Apply any exemptions on a granular, question-by-question basis rather than refusing the entire request.

If any part of this request is refused, please provide clear reasons for the refusal and consider disclosing the remainder of the information. I am also happy to discuss or narrow the scope of this request if that would assist in providing a full response.

Given the serious patient safety implications of this acknowledged governance gap — particularly for patients in rural and island communities — I consider there to be a strong public interest in disclosure.

particularly given:

the acknowledged governance gap confirmed by the Minister on 30 January 2026;
the £350 million of public funds involved annually; - the General Dental Council's own description of the current position as a "potentially un-regulated care environment";
and the disproportionate impact on rural and island communities with no practical alternative provider.

Any refusal to disclose information under section 30(b) of FOISA must be supported by specific evidence of substantial prejudice, rather than general or speculative assertions. In the event that any information is withheld, please provide a schedule setting out:

- a) a clear description of the information withheld,
- b) the specific exemption(s) being relied upon, and
- c) the public interest factors considered, including how any claimed prejudice was assessed.

After performing a search of Public Services Delivery Scotland's (PSD Scotland's) records I can confirm the following:

In response to Question 2:

Since May 2022 concerns have been raised with the Scottish Government/Chief Dental Officer (CDO) team, on several occasions, in regular meetings between the NHS National Services (NSS) Practitioner Services Directorate and the Scottish Government/CDO team.

It is important to note that from 1 April 2026, NHS National Services Scotland and NHS Education for Scotland (NES) joined to form PSD Scotland, enabling transformation in health, social care, and the wider public sector. More information regarding PSD Scotland can be found at the following URL:

[Public Services Delivery Scotland \(PSD Scotland\)](#)

The issues raised were as follows:

- Dentists choosing to restrict their sessional provision of NHS GDS care, which is creating delays in the availability of NHS GDS care.
- Failure of some dentists to offer all NHS GDS treatment to patients who are registered with them in an NHS GDS capitation arrangement.
- Concerns relating to the completeness of practice inspections where part of the practice has been identified as for the provision of private treatment only

In response to Questions 1, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7:

Under the Section 17 exemption of FOISA for “Information not held” PSD Scotland does not hold the information that you have requested.

In order to obtain the information that you have requested we suggest that you contact each of the NHSScotland Health Boards who are responsible for patient safety complaints, incidents or concerns by using the contact details listed on the NHS Inform website:

[Freedom of Information \(FOI\) | NHS inform](#)

I trust you will find the information of assistance and if you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me using the email address psd.foi@nhs.scot

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 Associate Director Corporate Governance using the email address psd.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 Appeal form](#).

Yours sincerely,

