

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Date 27 August 2026
Your Ref FOI-2026-3446
Our Ref FOI-2026-3446

Enquiries to [REDACTED]
Email psd.foi@nhs.scot

Dear [REDACTED],

Freedom of Information Reference FOI-2026-3446

I refer to your Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 (FOISA) request that we received on 4 August 2026 requesting the following information:

- 1. Annual expenditure for each of the last five financial years, please provide the total annual cost incurred by NHS Scotland for the storage, handling, and management of paper medical records. Please include, where available:**
 - On site storage costs
 - Off site storage contracts
 - Costs of consumables (folders, boxes, cabinets, etc.)
 - Costs associated with transporting paper records between sites
- 2. Digitisation plans Please provide copies of any current strategies, programmes, business cases, or planning documents relating to the digitisation of patient records across NHS Scotland. Specifically:**
 - Planned timelines for reducing or eliminating paper-based records
 - Any assessments of the current reliance on paper records
 - Any cost estimates or projected savings associated with digitisation
- 3. Paper only sites Please provide a list of any NHS Scotland sites that currently rely exclusively on paper medical records.**

After a search of our records Public Services Delivery Scotland (PSD Scotland) can confirm the following:

Chair Mr Keith Redpath
Chief Executive Professor Karen Reid

1. Annual expenditure for each of the last five financial years, please provide the total annual cost incurred by NHS Scotland for the storage, handling, and management of paper medical records. Please include, where available:

- On site storage costs
- Off site storage contracts
- Costs of consumables (folders, boxes, cabinets, etc.)
- Costs associated with transporting paper records between sites

Paper GP medical records are not stored on site except during the short process of moving them between GP Practices, home nations or to scan or store. Under the [FOISA Section 17 exemption for "Information not held"](#) it is not possible to provide financial costs in relation to the floor space used while processing these records.

For off-site storage costs these are the costs per annum paid to our contracted storage company. These costs include indexing; boxes used for storage and transport from our office to the company.

CALENDAR YEAR	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
STORAGE COSTS	£308,040	£279,026	£250,684	£226,588	£212,515

Transport/courier costs are noted below for paper GP medical records transfers between GP Practices and PSD Scotland offices in Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Glasgow also and between PSD Scotland offices until October 2023. From October 2023 all paper records have been managed via our Edinburgh office only.

CALENDAR YEAR	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
TRANSPORT COSTS	£125,304	£156,867	£168,716	£127,185	£112,322

2. Digitisation plans Please provide copies of any current strategies, programmes, business cases, or planning documents relating to the digitisation of patient records across NHS Scotland. Specifically:

- Planned timelines for reducing or eliminating paper-based records
- Any assessments of the current reliance on paper records
- Any cost estimates or projected savings associated with digitisation

Digital records were rolled out in GP Practices in Scotland between 2006 and 2008. From then all patients in Scotland have a digital record and if registered prior to the roll out of digital records a paper record also existed. 87% (776 out of 896) GP Practices in Scotland have now had their paper records back-scanned.

All back-scanned records will transfer digitally between GP Practices; and where there is a paper record due to go to a back-scanned GP it is diverted to be scanned. This prevents a back-scanned GP Practice receiving paper from a non-back-scanned GP Practice. This has an approx. cost of £300k per annum depending on volumes.

Since 2020 NHS Boards have received funding from Scottish Government towards supporting the back-scanning of paper records held at GP Practices. Currently 776 out of 896 GP Practices have been back scanned (87%). PSDS does not have financial details relating to the funding or costs to complete this exercise or the financial savings related to this, this would need to be obtained from the individual NHS Boards.

3. Paper only sites Please provide a list of any NHS Scotland sites that currently rely exclusively on paper medical records.

There are no GP Practices in Scotland that rely exclusively on paper in Scotland. All patients will have a Digital record. Patients now fall into 3 categories:

- Patients who have only ever had a digital record.
- Patients who have a digital record and a back-scan of a historic paper record.
- Patients who have a digital record and a paper record.

I hope that you will find this response helpful to you 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,

