

David Kelly
david.kelly@ctauk.org

Date: 7 May 2025
Your Ref:
Our Ref: FOI 24409
Please quote reference number on all correspondence

Enquiries to: FOI Team
Email: nhsh.foirequestshighland@nhs.scot

Dear David

**Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 – Request Ref: 24409
Non-Emergency Patient Transport**

Thank you for your request for information received on 7 April 2025 regarding the above. Please find below an extract from your request and our response:-

The Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 gives you the right to recorded information held by Scottish public authorities, subject to the exemptions listed in the legislation. FOISA does not impose a duty on Scottish Public Authorities to create new information, only to provide the information which is routinely recorded and held.

Please note that there are exemptions applicable to some of the information you have requested as detailed below.

- On behalf of the [Community Transport Association](#) (CTA), I would like to submit a Freedom of Information request for information pertaining to the following questions:
 1. Since the legislation was legally commenced on 1 October 2023, how has NHS Highland paid due regard to community benefit in non-emergency patient contracts, and the extent to which such contracts will improve economic, social or environmental wellbeing, to comply with its duty under Part 10, Section 120 of the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019?

NHS Highland is committed to exploring more opportunities to work with community initiatives and find the service they provide extremely beneficial to the Board being able to provide health care to our vast region.



Headquarters:

Assynt House, Beechwood Park, Inverness, IV2 3BW

Chair: Sarah Compton-Bishop
Chief Executive: Fiona Davies

2. Since the legislation was legally commenced on 1 October 2023, how has NHS Highland worked with bodies which provide community transport services in its area in providing non-emergency patient transport services to comply with its duty under Part 10, Section 121, Subsection 1 of the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019?

NHS Highland has several community car schemes that we work with in order to facilitate the transport of patients to their appointments. We continue to try and work with others to widen our scope in this regard.

3. Since the legislation was legally commenced on 1 October 2023, how has NHS Highland reported on:

- the steps it has taken to comply with these duties under the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019;
- the extent to which non-emergency patient transport services in its area have been effective and cost-effective; and,
- further action it proposes to take to comply with these duties?

During 2024/25, NHS Highland has had a project team dedicated to improving the efficiency of clinics offered to patients, reviewing the travel reimbursement to patients and communication of its policy. This includes working with local community schemes and improve access for local patients to these. We have had a full internal audit of our Patient Travel section within Finance and there are various recommendations that we need to work through including the areas being asked in this FOI.

4. In each of the last 5 years, how much did NHS Highland spend on non-emergency patient transport?

Due to the way our ledger is set up it is not possible to identify and provide this information. I therefore consider that this information is not held.

In accordance with Section 17 of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 this represents a formal notice that the information you have requested is not held by NHS Highland.

5. In each of the last 5 years, how much did NHS Highland spend with private taxi firms on non-emergency patient transport?

Highlands & Islands Travel Scheme (HITS) Taxis only

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
A&B	6,673.00	10,974.00	18,095.00	23,053.00	38,973.00
Highland	26,954.00	58,054.00	61,977.00	60,642.00	72,435.00 **
TOTAL	£33,627.00	£69,028.00	£80,072.00	£83,695.00	£111,408.00

** North Highland - Please note that prior to the FY 2024 transactions recorded on the ledger were not allocated against a specific cost type. It is only in 2024 where more detailed view is available

6. In each of the last 5 years, how much did NHS Highland spend with non-profit organisations which provide community transport services on non-emergency patient transport?

Community Car Schemes

2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Grand Total
£24,527.91	£43,693.14	£70,160.30	£45,929.56	£79,968.95	£264,279.86

I hope my response is helpful. If you wish to discuss my response or have any questions about this, please do not hesitate to get in touch quoting the reference number above.

Your right to request a review

Under Section 20 (1) of the Act, if you have made a request and are unhappy with our response, you have the right to request an internal review. You can do this by making a formal request in writing to the:-

Freedom of Information Officer
NHS Highland
Assynt House
Beechwood Park
Inverness, IV2 3BW

or by email nhsh.foirequestshighland@nhs.scot

Your request should explain why you wish a review to be carried out and should be made within forty working days of receiving this letter.

Appealing to the Commissioner

If you remain dissatisfied following the investigation of your review, then you have the right to appeal to the Scottish Information Commissioner within 6 months of the date of receiving the review response. You can request an appeal by accessing the [Online Appeal Service](#) on the Commissioner's website.

Alternatively, you can visit their website at www.itspublicknowledge.info/Appeal

If you do not wish to appeal online, you can also contact the Commissioner by email or post as follows:

Send your appeal by email

If you want to send your appeal by email, you should send your email to enquiries@itspublicknowledge.info

Send your appeal by post

If you want to send your appeal by post, you should send your letter to:

The Scottish Information Commissioner
Kinburn Castle
Doubledykes Road
St Andrews
Fife
KY16 9DS

If you need help to make an appeal, you can contact the Commissioner's Office:

Email: enquiries@itspublicknowledge.info

Telephone: 01334 464610

Further information on making an appeal to the Scottish Information Commissioner can be found on their website [here](#).

Yours sincerely

Heather Campbell
Freedom of Information Officer