

Date: 03 March 2026
Our ref: K: FOI/Ref: 2026-3265
Email: NSS.DevServicesFOI@nhs.scot

Freedom of Information Reference: FOI-2026-3265 – Meals served to hospital patients.

I refer to your freedom of information request that we received on 05 February 2026 requesting the following information.

I'm getting in touch regarding meals served to hospital patients across Scotland's NHS health boards. I'm interested to know which food and drink is sourced from overseas and how much has been spent on these foreign foods between January 2021 and December 2025.

If you could please offer an annual breakdown of the costs incurred per health board for food and drink that has been sourced from abroad, and which countries they're from, it would be much appreciated.

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 it. NHS National Services Scotland (NSS) does not hold information on the of the costs incurred per health board for food and drink that has been sourced from abroad, or which countries they are from. National Procurement (NP), a division of NSS, is responsible for tendering and managing a range of national frameworks that NHS Scotland Health Boards (HBs) use to source ingredients for meal production. There are nine frameworks in total, and HBs purchase ingredients locally from these contracts to prepare meals for their own hospitals. Because each HB manages its own local purchasing activity and meal production processes, NP is unable to provide detailed information on behalf of individual boards.

Section 15 of FOISA places a legal duty on Scottish public authorities to provide advice and assistance to anyone who makes (or is thinking about making) an FOI request. Under this section of the act, we can provide the following information regarding the national frameworks which we think would be useful to you.

Please find attached Appendix 1 – FOI-3265. This appendix outlines, for each national contract, the approximate annual spends, the geographic location of the supplier base, and the estimated percentage split of products sourced from Scotland, the rest of the UK, and non-UK countries. It is important to note that, wherever products are available within Scotland or the UK, they are sourced locally. However, many items are not produced domestically and therefore must be procured from outside the UK. In such cases, the need for these products is often driven by clinical considerations, including patient care and specific dietary requirements.

To obtain information at the HB level, you will need to submit separate requests to each organisation using the contact details provided below:



Chair Keith Redpath
Chief Executive Mary Morgan

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

