

Letter issued by email:  
[REDACTED]

Date: 12 June 2026  
Our Ref: FOI2026-3355  
Enquiries to: Freedom of Information  
Email: [psd.foi@nhs.scot](mailto:psd.foi@nhs.scot)

Dear [REDACTED]

**Freedom of Information Reference: FOI2026-3355**

Thank you for your information request, received by Public Services Delivery Scotland (PSD Scotland), on 14 May 2026.

Your request, including your note of clarification:

*I would like to understand how your organisation has engaged independent (non-NHS) providers in the delivery of mental health services, including psychological therapy, ADHD assessments, and autism assessments.*

*Please provide the following information for the past five years:*

1. *Engagement of Independent Providers*
  - a) *A list of all independent/private organisations commissioned, contracted, or otherwise engaged to deliver:*
    - *Psychological therapy services*
    - *ADHD assessment and/or treatment services*
    - *Autism assessment services*
  - b) *For each organisation identified, please provide:*
    - *The name of the organisation*
    - *The type of services delivered*
    - *The start and end date of the arrangement (or confirmation if ongoing)*
2. *Nature of the Arrangement*

*For each provider listed, please specify:*

  - *The mechanism of engagement (e.g. formal contract, service level agreement, framework agreement, direct award, spot purchasing, individual patient funding, pilot programme, or other)*
  - *Whether the arrangement was established via a competitive tender process, framework agreement, or non-competitive route*

- *If non-competitive, the rationale for this approach (where recorded)*
3. *Contractual and Financial Information*  
*For each arrangement, please provide:*
- *The total contract value, or total spend to date (annual breakdown if available)*
  - *The duration of the agreement*
  - *Any available high-level description of pricing structure (e.g. per-assessment, block contract, per-session rate), where not exempt under Section 33*
4. *Activity and Service Use*  
*Where available, please provide:*
- *The number of referrals made to each provider*
  - *The type of patients referred (e.g. adult, CAMHS, complex cases, waiting list initiatives)*
  - *Whether these services were used as part of a waiting list reduction initiative or service pressure response*
5. *Governance and Decision-Making*
- a) *Please outline the internal process by which independent providers are approved or engaged within your organisation*
- b) *Please provide the job titles (not individual names) of the roles responsible for:*
- *Commissioning or approving such arrangements*
  - *Managing relationships with independent providers*
  - *Overseeing clinical governance of outsourced services*
- c) *Where possible, please provide generic contact routes (e.g. departmental email addresses) for these functions*
6. *Supporting Documentation*  
*Please provide copies of, or links to:*
- *Any service specifications, agreements, or memoranda of understanding with independent providers (redacted as appropriate)*
  - *Any internal policies or guidance relating to the use of independent providers for these services*
  - *Any documentation relating to pilot programmes or waiting list initiatives involving external providers*
7. *Additional Context*  
*If available, please provide:*
- *Any evaluation, audit, or outcome data relating to the use of independent providers*
  - *Any stated future plans to expand, reduce, or change the use of independent providers for these services*

*My primary interest is in the direct delivery of patient care, primarily around therapy, ADHD and ASD assessments where external providers are utilised. However, I would also be interested in training and learning perspective delivery. Would I also be able to be given information on this too please?*

### Our response:

A partial response regarding our engagement of independent providers in the delivery of psychological therapy services is attached (Appendix A). Under Section 17 of FOISA 2002, information on other ADHD and autism services is not held.

We consider that the requested information regarding pricing is exempt from disclosure under Section 33(1)(b), as disclosure would, or would be likely to, prejudice substantially the commercial interests of PSD Scotland and the third-party provider.

Releasing details of the pricing structure, including how services are costed and charged, would provide insight into commercially sensitive arrangements. This information could be used by competitors to undercut or otherwise disadvantage the provider in future procurement exercises and could weaken PSD Scotland's ability to secure best value in future negotiations.

This exemption is subject to the public interest test. We recognise that there is a public interest in transparency around the use of public funds and how services are commissioned. However, this must be balanced against the public interest in protecting fair competition and ensuring that PSD Scotland is able to obtain best value from providers without compromising their commercial position. On balance, we conclude that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosure in this instance.

Aside from engaging with NHS Scotland or Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), PSD Scotland engages with independent (non-NHS) providers to support the delivery of specific elements of education and training activity. These providers are engaged where there is a specific requirement for specialist expertise or capacity. Engagement is typically related to education, training or workforce development, rather than direct clinical service delivery.

Under Section 12 of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act (FOISA) 2002, a complete response that includes all our mental health training and learning activity would exceed the amount prescribed by the FOISA 2002. This is due to the breadth and complexity of the request, which would require:

- Collation of information across multiple directorates and programmes.
- Manual review of a number of contracts, purchase orders and records.
- Extraction and validation of detailed financial, contractual and activity data.

Further information on costs can be seen in the following table.

**Table 1:** Estimated organisational costs for retrieving mental health training and learning.

<b>Task</b>	<b>Estimated Cost</b>	<b>Totals</b>
Data retrieval from range of staff including Heads of Programme, General Manager, Business Manager, Procurement Officer, Senior Admin Officers, to compile list of commissions that are in scope.	43 to 44 hours at £15.00 per hour.	£645 to £660.
Review of every commission and extraction of information relating to questions asked, across a range of systems.*	105 hours at £15.00 per hour.	£1575
Communication between Heads of Programme, Procurement, Admin, and others via email and meetings to support the extraction, review and collation of information for each commission.	23 hours at £15.00 per hour.	£345
Compiling information into an accessible format.	21 hours and 12 minutes at £15.00 per hour.	£318
	<b>Total</b>	<b>£2883 to £2898</b>
*This is a minimum estimate – some entries are likely to take longer than others.		

The Scottish Information Commissioner guidance (2023) on excessive costs notes that the upper limit is £600, which equates to 40 hours at £15.00 per hour.

Please note that Section 12 has been applied only to this specific element of your request. Where it has been possible to do so within the prescribed cost limit, PSD Scotland has provided the information readily available in response to other parts of your request.

We have considered whether a complete response to training and learning could be refined for a reduced timeframe. However, given the nature of the information requested and the way in which it is held across systems, even this reduced scope would exceed the cost threshold.

If you wish to refine your request to bring it within the cost limits, you may wish to:

- Limit the scope to a specific workstream for training and learning, e.g., autism, and the timeline to one financial year, and;
- Focus on a smaller subset of information.

I trust you will find this information of assistance. If you require any further information, then do not hesitate to get back in touch. If you are dissatisfied with this reply under the terms of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002, you should contact us again in writing or by email within 40 days of receipt of this response to request an internal review.

If you remain unhappy with the outcome of that internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Scottish Information Commissioner for a decision within six months of receiving our response. For further information, please visit the Scottish Information Commissioner's [website](#).

Yours sincerely

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of the sender.

Enclosures:

Appendix A: Mental health services.

Appendix B: Contextual education and training information, including advice and assistance.