

[REDACTED]

Letter issued by email

Date: 12 August 2026
Our Ref: FOI2026-3423
Enquiries to: Freedom of Information
Email: psd.foi@nhs.scot

Dear [REDACTED]

Freedom of Information Reference: FOI2026-3423

Thank you for your information request received on 15 July 2026 by Public Services Delivery Scotland (PSD Scotland).

From 1 April 2026, NHS Education for Scotland (NES) and NHS National Services Scotland (NSS) joined to form Public Services Delivery Scotland (PSD Scotland), enabling transformation in health, social care, and the wider public sector. This means your Freedom of Information request is now being responded to by PSD Scotland.

Your Request

We are writing on behalf of the UKFP 2026 Reserve List Applicant Collective, an informal group of eligible applicants who completed the UK Foundation Programme application process in good faith but remain without an allocation.

Before the third reserve-allocation round, UKFPO reported that 401 applicants remained on the reserve list after 268 had been allocated through the first two rounds. Following Round 3 on 15 July, some additional applicants have been allocated, but a substantial number—including several members of our collective—remain without a Foundation post.

The exclusion of Scotland has materially worsened this situation. UKFPO expressly states that there are no Scottish vacancies available for the reserve list and that remaining applicants can currently be allocated only to England, Wales or Northern Ireland.

*This is particularly difficult to understand because the Scottish Government stated in April that a further 72 Foundation places were to be added in 2026, following 252 additional places created since 2021. We recognise that the existence of these posts does not necessarily mean that they are currently vacant. However, it makes it entirely reasonable to ask how many posts were funded, how they were allocated and whether every available Scottish post has genuinely been filled.
The remaining applicants are in an exceptionally dire position. They committed*

Chair Mr Keith Redpath
Chief Executive Professor Karen Reid

substantial financial, professional and personal resources to a recruitment process whose consequences were changed while it was already under way. Many deferred alternative employment or training routes, paid for examinations and registration requirements, and organised their lives around an anticipated August 2026 start. They now face prolonged unemployment, loss of clinical progression, immigration complications and the possibility that they cannot simply reapply successfully in 2027. Our collective has also shared credible, anonymised evidence of severe psychological distress and suicidal ideation among affected applicants. We are not asking the Scottish Government to verify individual social-media reports through general correspondence, but the seriousness of those reports should not be reduced to ordinary disappointment or frustration.

NES itself acknowledged during parliamentary scrutiny that international medical graduates play a vital role in Scotland, particularly in smaller hospitals and remote and rural services. It also recognised that applicants affected by the 2026 changes may not have known about them when they applied and that this created a reputational risk. We respectfully request your urgent intervention to establish:

- 1. How many F1 posts are funded in Scotland for 2026–27, including the announced 72 additional places.*
- 2. How many are currently occupied, accepted, awaiting confirmation, held back, unfilled or affected by withdrawal.*
- 3. Who determined that no Scottish vacancies would be made available to the UKFP reserve list, and on what operational or funding basis.*
- 4. Whether every vacancy caused by withdrawal, graduation failure, registration difficulty, delayed start or non-attendance will be returned to the national reserve list.*
- 5. Whether Scotland will identify additional standard, transitional, supernumerary or delayed-start Foundation posts for applicants still stranded after Round 3.*
- 6. Whether Scottish vacancies arising after the main August start date will continue to be offered through the 2026 reserve list rather than being left vacant or filled through another route.*

We are not asking for the statutory prioritisation framework to be reversed. We are asking for a proportionate transitional response for applicants caught by its mid-cycle implementation.

I wish to advise under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 (FOISA), that PSD Scotland can provide a partial response to the six questions within your request, as detailed below.

1. How many F1 posts are funded in Scotland for 2026–27, including the announced 72 additional places.

The total number of funded Foundation Year 1 (FY1) posts in Scotland for 2026-27 are 1173, which include the 72 expansion posts.

2. How many are currently occupied, accepted, awaiting confirmation, held back, unfilled or affected by withdrawal.

Under Section 17 of the FOISA this information is not held. The final position will not be known until after the start date in August 2026, as all applicants are still completing pre-employment and GMC paperwork.

3. Who determined that no Scottish vacancies would be made available to the UKFP reserve list, and on what operational or funding basis.

This decision was made by Scottish Government.

4. Whether every vacancy caused by withdrawal, graduation failure, registration difficulty, delayed start or non-attendance will be returned to the national reserve list.

Vacancies arising because of withdrawal, failure to graduate, registration issues, delayed commencement, or non-attendance are not automatically returned to the national reserve list. For the 2026 intake, any available vacancies have been utilised to meet existing commitments, including placeholders, approved Inter-Foundation School Transfers (IFSTs), and doctors who are out of sync (as a result of leave, less than full-time training, or other periods of absence). Consequently, no withdrawals have been returned to the national reserve list.

5. Whether Scotland will identify additional standard, transitional, supernumerary or delayed-start Foundation posts for applicants still stranded after Round 3.

As of the current date, no additional funding has been identified.

6. Whether Scottish vacancies arising after the main August start date will continue to be offered through the 2026 reserve list rather than being left vacant or filled through another route.

Any vacancy that arises in year is returned to the relevant NHS Board area.

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

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