

[REDACTED]
Letter issued by email

Date: 18 September 2026
Our Ref: FOI2026-3465
Enquiries to: Freedom of Information
Email: psd.foi@nhs.scot

Dear [REDACTED]

Freedom of Information Reference: FOI2026-3465

Thank you for your information request received on 21 August 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.

I would be grateful if you could clarify the following points regarding the 2026 Foundation Programme allocation process:

- Can you explain why an applicant who ranked Scotland first could be allocated to another Foundation School?*
- How many applicants ranked Scotland as their first preference for 2026, and how many were ultimately allocated elsewhere?*
- How many applicants who graduated from Scottish medical schools were allocated outside Scotland?*
- Does being a ScotGEM graduate provide any priority or preference for allocation to a Scottish Foundation School?*
- Are there any plans to change the allocation process to give Scottish-trained or Scottish-resident graduates greater priority for Scottish Foundation Programme places?*
- More generally, is the UK Foundation Programme Office concerned about situations in which graduates of programmes specifically designed around the workforce needs of a particular nation are allocated elsewhere?*

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

Chair Mr Keith Redpath
Chief Executive Professor Karen Reid

1. Can you explain why an applicant who ranked Scotland first could be allocated to another Foundation School?

The UK Foundation Programme Office (UKFPO) manages the national, competitive application process across the UK for the Foundation Programme. Further information regarding the process is available on the UKFPO website: [UK Foundation Programme - UK Foundation Programme](#).

In 2026 the Scotland Foundation Programme had more doctors ranking Scotland first than Foundation Year one posts available in Scotland. In effect, the Scotland Foundation Programme was oversubscribed by 103 applicants who ranked training in Scotland as their first choice preference. The arrangements in place at UK-level via a competitive process mean that some applicants will not get their stated preference. Further information is available via: [First preference ratios - UK Foundation Programme](#)

The UKFPO website also includes information in relation to the UK Medical Training (Prioritisation) Act, which includes all recruitment to foundation and speciality training programmes commencing in August 2026. The Act prioritises graduates from the UK, Ireland and specific European nations for the UK Foundation Programme, reducing placeholder offers and changing how jobs are allocated. Further information is available via: [Important Update: Medical Training \(Prioritisation\) Act becomes law - UK Foundation Programme](#).

2. How many applicants ranked Scotland as their first preference for 2026, and how many were ultimately allocated elsewhere?

Under Section 25 of the FOISA this information is otherwise accessible via: [First preference ratios - UK Foundation Programme](#)

How many applicants who graduated from Scottish medical schools were allocated outside Scotland?

In 2026 there were 74 students who gained a Scottish Primary Medical Qualification (PMQ) who identified Scotland as their first preference and were not allocated a Foundation Training post in Scotland.

3. Does being a ScotGEM graduate provide any priority or preference for allocation to a Scottish Foundation School?

To date this has not provided any priority or preference unless the applicant had a pre-allocation request.

A pre-allocation request is a formal application submitted through the [Oriel national recruitment system](#) that allows final-year medical students to request a guaranteed placement in a specific Foundation School based on exceptional personal circumstances. Pre-allocation is designed strictly for situations where an applicant must be in a specific geographical location, rather than where they would prefer to live. There are however plans in place to prioritise all Scottish PMQ holders for 2017 (see below).

4. Are there any plans to change the allocation process to give Scottish-trained or Scottish-resident graduates greater priority for Scottish Foundation Programme places?

Yes, plans have been put in place by the UKFPO for 2027 for students who obtained a Scottish PMQ and gave Scotland as their first preference to be given priority. Further information is available via: [Foundation Allocation Scotland First Process | Scottish Medical Training](#)

5. More generally, is the UK Foundation Programme Office concerned about situations in which graduates of programmes specifically designed around the workforce needs of a particular nation are allocated elsewhere?

Under Section 17 of the FOISA this information is not held by PSD Scotland.

Any questions regarding UKFPO policy should be directed to UKFPO. Contact details are available via: [UK Foundation Programme - UK Foundation Programme](#)

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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