



**Scottish
Ambulance
Service**

Taking Care to the Patient

Chair Tom Steele
Chief Executive Pauline Howie OBE



Ref FOI/1221/21

20 September 2021

Dear Mr Jones,

REVIEW OF FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST

Following your correspondence on 24 August 2021 in response to your Freedom of Information request (reference FOI/1221/21) I have conducted an internal review of this request.

This review considers your original request and the subsequent actions and responses of the Scottish Ambulance Service (the Service) which have been provided up to today (20 September 2021).

Detail

On 25 July 2021, you asked for the following information:

1. Can you please advise if your organisation issues operational staff with body armour/stab vests.
2. If your organisation doesn't routinely issue body armour/stab vest to all operational staff please include the justification/s & and any risk assessments for this as well as any policy around this.
3. Where body armour is issued to staff can you provide me with the make, model and cost of these vests. Please also included body armour issued to specialist units for specific risks such as the response to an MTA incident.
4. Where these items are no longer required by an individual (e.g. individual leaves employment etc) what is the trust's policy on reuse and/or disposal of these items, please also include any companies/contractors that the trust use to dispose of these items.

Response

I can confirm that we have provided you with a response on the 24 August 2021, which stated that we were unable to provide the information you requested, exempting your request under Section 31(1) of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002.

Scottish Ambulance Service, National Headquarters, Gyle Square, 1 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9EB
Telephone: 0131 314 0000 Email: sas.foi@nhs.scot

Review

I note that section 31(1) was applied to the entirety of your request for information. This exemption applied when required for the purpose of safeguarding national security. I have reviewed the response to your FOI and have considered whether this exemption was applied appropriately for each part of your request.

1. Can you please advise if your organisation issues operational staff with body armour/stab vests.

On review of the application of the exemption for this question, I have concluded that the exemption was not applied correctly. Accordingly, as we are no longer relying on section 31(1), please see below for a response to this part of your request.

We do not routinely provide body armour to operational staff, but our Specialist Operations Team are issued with body armour.

2. If your organisation doesn't routinely issue body armour/stab vest to all operational staff please include the justification/s & and any risk assessments for this as well as any policy around this.

On review of the application of the exemption for this question, I have concluded that the exemption was not applied correctly. Accordingly, as we are no longer relying on section 31(1), please see below for a response to this part of your request.

An annual review of violent incidents is carried out. This review is reported to and reviewed by the Service's Health, Safety and Wellbeing Group.

The Service also has a Violence and Aggression Policy, which is reviewed every 3 years or sooner if required. Please see attached a copy of this Policy.

3. Where body armour is issued to staff can you provide me with the make, model and cost of these vests. Please also included body armour issued to specialist units for specific risks such as the response to an MTA incident.

On review of the application of the exemption for this question, I can confirm that the application of the exemption under section 31(1) exemption was appropriate in response to this part of your request.

In this case, it remains that section 31(1) of the Act, which exempts information for the purpose of safeguarding national security, applies to the information requested in this question. As you have noted in your review request the application of this exemption is subject to the public interest test to determine whether the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the disclosure of the information. If information is withheld on public interest grounds then the reasons for this must be explained.

The review has concluded that although the Scottish Ambulance Service has an obligation to uphold openness and transparency, in this case, the overwhelming public interest lies in ensuring any information released would not be beneficial to terrorist organisations.

4. Where these items are no longer required by an individual (e.g. individual leaves employment etc) what is the trust's policy on reuse and/or disposal of these items, please also include any companies/contractors that the trust use to dispose of these items.

On review of the application of the exemption for this question, I have concluded that the exemption was not applied correctly. Accordingly, as we are no longer relying on section 31(1), please see below for a response to this part of your request.

At the end of their operational life all PPE is securely disposed of to ensure that there are no residual security or Health and Safety implications through their continued use by other parties.

I apologise for the failure to disclose this information to you in our initial response.

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of the review you have the right, within six months of receipt of this review decision, to apply for a decision to the Scottish Information Commissioner who can be contacted at:

Kinburn Castle,
Doubledykes Road,
St Andrews,
KY16 9DS

or by email at enquiries@itspublicknowledge.info. Further information can also be found via the Commissioner's website at www.itspublicknowledge.info/Appeal.

You also have the right of appeal, on a point of law, to the Court of Session.

Yours sincerely,

Katy Barclay
Head of Business Intelligence