

**Request Reference:** FOI/007/25

**Published:** 16 June 2025

**Information requested:**

I am keen to understand the spend on communications staff by your health board.

As such, can you provide, broken down by the financial years 2019/20, 2020/21, 2021/22, 2022/23, 2023/24, 2024/25 and 2025/26 (most recent):

1. the total amount spent on all communications staff employed in your health board

As of 1 April 2025:

2. the total number of staff currently employed in a communications role, broken down by role and salary
3. the total number of posts currently unfilled/vacant.

I also understand that you have 20 working days to provide me with the information. Please could I request that this data is provided in Excel format, as is allowed by FOI rules.

**Response:**

1. The information for 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23 is available from our website and as such this information is exempt from disclosure because it can be obtained without making a FOI request. (FOISA S25(1)) [FOI/062/23](#) is available from our FOI disclosure logs.

We have enclosed a excel spreadsheet with the information as requested, however we have withheld 2019/20 costs as it constitutes personal data. (FOISA S38(1)(b)) As this is an absolute exemption, it is not subject to a public interest test.

We have withheld the salary information as it constitutes personal data. (FOISA S38(1)(b)) As this is an absolute exemption, it is not subject to a public interest test.

**Advice and Guidance:**

In considering if we should release salary and cost information we took into account Decisions [288/2024](#) about a Chair's pay and [050/2010](#) about salary gradings for identifiable individuals made by the Scottish Information Commissioner relating to the use of the personal information exemption (FOISA section 38(1)(b)).

We also considered that the individuals who hold Communication roles are easily identifiable and therefore information relating solely to their role will be information relating to an identifiable individual. Information that is about an identifiable individual is the definition of "Personal Data" in the UK GDPR (UK GDPR Article 4(1))

Taking account of any views expressed by the post holders, we have concluded that the interests and the fundamental rights and freedoms of the post holders overrides any legitimate interest of the applicant.