



**Scottish
Ambulance
Service**

University National NHS Board



Freedom of Information Request

2nd August 2024

Question

I am aware that Scottish government has launched a project known as the 'Pride Badge and Pride Pledge' following work undertaken by a Working Group in 2020, and that the project was launched in the middle of the Covid pandemic. Individual NHS Boards were invited to opt-in to the project. Within that context and in line with the Freedom of Information [Scotland] Act 2022, I am writing to ask you to provide me with:

- the identity of the NHS Scottish Ambulance Service [SAS] employee responsible for signing-off the decision that NHS SAS participate in the project and who authorised the launch
- a summary of the NHS SAS project, including costings, outcomes set for success, data gathering and handling arrangements, overall timetable, and plans for project evaluation
- a copy of the government circular distributed to all Health Boards advising of the project and setting out the terms of how Health Boards could opt-in to the project
- the date when the project as operated by NHS SAS came to an end
- how many employees in NHS SAS signed up to wear the badge and take the pledge
- how many employees in NHS SAS still deemed 'active' badge wearers and upholders of the pledge
- what data gathering and recording system is used to log NHS SAS employees who are badge wearers and pledge upholders, and what level of security is attached to accessing the data
- a copy of a formal evaluation of the NHS SAS project
- the identity of the employee responsible for deciding that the NHS SAS 'Pride Badge and Pride Pledge' project did not need to be subject to an Equality & Diversity Impact Assessment before being activated
- what arrangements, allowances or mitigations in the design and implementation of the project were put in place by NHS SAS to avoid any adverse impact on people who hold beliefs which are commonly termed 'gender critical' and who do not accept the concept that transwomen can be women Please provide all the information in electronic form and send it to this email address.



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Answer

- **the identity of the NHS Scottish Ambulance Service [SAS] employee responsible for signing-off the decision that NHS SAS participate in the project and who authorised the launch**

For the information requested the Scottish Ambulance Service is applying Section 38(1)(b) of the Act. An exemption under section 38(1)(b) of FOISA states: information which relates to a living individual other than the applicant for the information will be exempt where the disclosure of the information would contravene any of the data protection principles in Article 5(1) of the UK GDPR and in section 34(1) of the DPA 2018.

- **a summary of the NHS SAS project, including costings, outcomes set for success, data gathering and handling arrangements, overall timetable, and plans for project evaluation.**

The NHS Scotland Pride badge is a Scottish Government initiative open to all Scottish health boards. No Scottish Ambulance Service finances are used to pay for the badges; all costings information would be held by the Scottish Government. Health boards are allocated a quantity of badges based on the size of their workforce. SAS advertises the Pride badge on our staff intranet and internal communications. Staff have no obligation to wear a badge. For staff who do wish to wear a badge, they have the option to sign the pledge form and become a badge wearer. The completed pledge form is returned to the HR Team, who will scan and save the pledge within a secured computer drive before issuing the badge. SAS plans to undertake a review of the Pride badge in subsequent years to align with mainstreaming equalities reports.

- **a copy of the government circular distributed to all Health Boards advising of the project and setting out the terms of how Health Boards could opt-in to the project.**

As per Section 17 of Freedom of information act 2002 (FOISA), The Scottish Ambulance Service does not hold the information that you have requested.

To help explain the application of this exemption, the requested information is owned by a third-party company. All documents circulated to the Health Boards are the intellectual property of the Scottish Government.

- **the date when the project as operated by NHS SAS came to an end**

The Availability of the rainbow badges is on-going in SAS with no set end date.

- **how many employees in NHS SAS signed up to wear the badge and take the pledge**

More than 150 Scottish Ambulance Service employees have signed up to the NHS Scotland Pride badge Pledge Form

- **how many employees in NHS SAS still deemed 'active' badge wearers and upholders of the pledge**

Working Together for Better Patient Care



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A total of 150 staff within SAS have signed up to wear the NHS Scotland Pride Badge. We are unable to ascertain how many staff actively wear the badge on a daily basis.

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- **what data gathering and recording system is used to log NHS SAS employees who are badge wearers and pledge upholders, and what level of security is attached to accessing the data**

Pride badge pledge forms are scanned and uploaded to a secure folder within a secured computer drive on Sharepoint. An accompanying Excel spreadsheet is used to document the details of Pride Badge wearers. Only authorised staff within the HR department have access to these details.

- **a copy of a formal evaluation of the NHS SAS project**

No such evaluation of this initiative has taken place by the Scottish Ambulance Service. The Scottish Government contacted all health boards in 2024 to collate information about the NHS Scotland Pride badge with the aim of undertaking an evaluation from a Scottish Government perspective.

- **the identity of the employee responsible for deciding that the NHS SAS 'Pride Badge and Pride Pledge' project did not need to be subject to an Equality & Diversity Impact Assessment before being activated**

For the information requested the Scottish Ambulance Service is applying Section 38(1)(b) of the Act. An exemption under section 38(1)(b) of FOISA states: information which relates to a living individual other than the applicant for the information will be exempt where the disclosure of the information would contravene any of the data protection principles in Article 5(1) of the UK GDPR and in section 34(1) of the DPA 2018.

- **what arrangements, allowances or mitigations in the design and implementation of the project were put in place by NHS SAS to avoid any adverse impact on people who hold beliefs which are commonly termed 'gender critical' and who do not accept the concept that transwomen can be women Please provide all the information in electronic form and send it to this email address.**

The NHS Scotland Pride badge is a Scottish Government initiative open to all Scottish health boards. Staff and volunteers are given the opportunity to opt in and sign a pledge form to demonstrate they are an LGBTQ+ ally or member of the LGBTQ+ community. Badge wearers provide a visible presence to other staff and service users that they are a safe contact within the hospital setting.

The opt-in voluntary nature of the Pride badge means that only those who wish to visually indicate they are an LGBTQ+ ally can do so. Individuals with gender critical beliefs can remain unaffected and continue to wear their uniforms without any pressure from the organisation to sign the pledge or wear the badge. The ethos of this initiative is all about 'freedom of choice' as opposed to dictating a narrative or imposing a belief system upon another individual.

The Pride badge incorporates the full spectrum of sexual orientations and identities. Whilst trans equality is represented within the badge design, it does not define the overall messaging