

Freedom of Information request 508-23

Request

I'm trying to gauge the effect of private practice by senior doctors on the NHS in Scotland.

1. I'd like to know what your full-strength complement of full-time consultants would be and how many you have throughout the organisation in order to assess what the shortage is.
2. I'd also like to know how many of your consultants also work in the private sector and what the average split is between NHS working time and private work time.
3. Can you give me the average full-time earnings of an NHS consultant in your area?
4. Can you tell me how many consultants you are advertising for at an agreed time, let's say 31 July 2023, and whether you have undertaken any special measures, such as incentives, to help you recruit them?
5. Can you also tell me what measures you use to plug the gaps left by the shortage of consultants?

Response

1. The full funded establishment of NHS Borders Consultant workforce is 106.25 WTE. Consultants currently in post for the NHS Borders workforce is 96.90 WTE.
2. From job planning, 7 Consultants have declared private sector commitments. Data on the average split of NHS working time and private working is not held, as defined in Section 17, Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002, but all of the Consultant identified have NHS contracts with a job plan of at least 9 Programmed Activities (36 hours).
3. The average basic full-time equivalent earnings for Consultants is £108,143 per annum.
4. As at present date 3 Consultant posts are advertised. We expect there to be the same number on 31 July 2023. On the conclusion of the Summer holiday period, we expect to be advertising 5 Consultant posts, for example on 31 August 2023.

There are currently no recruitment and retention premia offers, as outlined in the Terms and Conditions of Service, as this would apply Scotland wide rather than for an individual Health Board. NHS Borders have focused on other non-financial incentives to recruitment such as: split site working with access to tertiary centres for specialist experience and skills (when agreed with partner health boards), relocation packages, access to management development for new consultants, flexible job plans.

5. Where recruitment of a Consultant has not been possible, NHS Borders have taken the following actions:
 - appointed directly employed NHS Locum Consultants and hired agency Locum Consultants.
 - skill mix and the appointment of different grades of doctors (Specialty Doctor and Clinical Fellow) and other health professionals – Physician Associates, Advanced Practices Nurses, and Paramedics.
 - Certificate of Eligibility for Specialist Registration (CESR) opportunities and support offered to eligible Doctors as an alternative career route to Consultant.
 - Recruitment search by framework agencies has provided two Consultant appointments in the past 12 months.

If you are not satisfied with the way your request has been handled or the decision given, you may ask NHS Borders to review its actions and the decision. If you would like to request a review please apply in writing to, Freedom of Information Review, NHS Borders, Room 2EC3, Education Centre, Borders General Hospital, Melrose, TD6 9BS or foi.enquiries@borders.scot.nhs.uk.

The request for a review should include your name and address for correspondence, the request for information to which the request relates and the issue which you wish to be reviewed. Please state the reference number **508-23** on this request. Your request should be made within 40 working days from receipt of this letter.

If following this review, you remain dissatisfied with the outcome, you may appeal to the Scottish Information Commissioner and request an investigation of your complaint. Your request to the Scottish Information Commissioner should be in writing (or other permanent form), stating your name and an address for correspondence. You should provide the details of the request and your reasons for dissatisfaction with both the original response by NHS Borders and your reasons for dissatisfaction with the outcome of the internal review. Your application for an investigation by the Scottish Information Commissioner must be made within six months of your receipt of the response with which you are dissatisfied. The address for the Office of the Scottish Information Commissioner is, Office of the Scottish Information Commissioner, Kinburn Castle, Doubledykes Road, St Andrews, Fife.