

FOI 3043

6<sup>th</sup> May 2025

## **FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 – INFORMATION REQUEST**

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Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, I would like to request the following information regarding all current medical consultants employed by Southern Health and Social Care Trust:

- Full name
  - Medical specialty
  - Primary hospital or site of work
  - Professional work email address (e.g., @hscni.net)
- If work email addresses can't be disclosed due to data protection reasons, I kindly request:
- Generic departmental contact emails, and
  - Any official guidance on how to contact specific consultants through their respective departments

### **Response:**

The Trust considers this information to be exempt from disclosure under Section 36 of the Freedom of Information Act. Section 36 states information is exempt if, in the reasonable opinion of a qualified person, disclosure of the information under this Act:

**36.** - (1) *This section applies to—*

- (a) *information which is held by a government department or by the Welsh Government and is not exempt information by virtue of section 35, and*
  - (b) *information which is held by any other public authority.*
- (2) *Information to which this section applies is exempt information if, in the reasonable opinion of a qualified person, disclosure of the information under this Act*
- (c) *would otherwise prejudice, or would be likely otherwise to prejudice, the effective conduct of public affairs.*

### **Refusal notice: Section 36(2) - information prejudice to the effective conduct of public affairs.**

*The Trust considers that section 36 (2) (c) applies in this case, as disclosure of the names and direct contact details for staff members would prejudice the efficient and effective management of public contact. This is because staff members would be likely to find themselves dealing with emails and contact that may have been more appropriately dealt with elsewhere, which would in turn distract and impact on staff members ability and capacity to do their day-to-day work.*

*On its website, the Trust publishes details of the main contacts for its services [Our Hospitals | Southern Health & Social Care Trust](#). In addition, further contact details can be found under specific services on the Trust website.*

*Section 36 requires that the qualified person, the Chief Executive of the Trust, must give their reasonable opinion that the exemption is engaged. The Chief Executive considers section 36 is engaged.*

*As Section 36 is a qualified exemption, we are also required to decide on a case-by-case basis, whether the public interest in maintaining this exemption outweighs the public interest in its disclosure. The Trust has considered this below:*

*Factors in favour of maintaining the exemption:*

- Ensuring that public contact is managed effectively and efficiently is key to providing good public services. Routing calls from the public through carefully managed publicly available numbers ensures that calls are passed on to the correct services.*
- Publication of key numbers helps ensure that members of the public can easily select the correct numbers for contacting services. These numbers are carefully managed, with the aim of ensuring that there is continuity of service regardless of any internal changes to services.*

*Factors against maintaining the exemption:*

- We do not believe that there is any public interest in disclosing direct contact details as the Trust maintains details of central points of contact page on its website.*

*On balance of the public interest test, we believe that public interest lies in withholding the requested information.*

Email: [Foi.Team@Southerntrust.hscni.net](mailto:Foi.Team@Southerntrust.hscni.net)