

FOI 3081 - 1

3rd June 2025

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 – INFORMATION REQUEST

IMWH Response:

I would like to request the following:

- In relation to counselling services for parents who have lost a child or baby in the last five years broken down by month
There is no counselling services offered by IMWH for parents who have lost a child or baby in the last five years.
- how many WTE members of staff are available in the trust to undertake these services
There are no appointed staff to undertake these services within IMWH
- how many hours a week is the service available
There are no appointed hours a week for this service
- how many people have availed of the service
This service is not offered within IMWH
- and if there is a waiting list, how long is this and how many people are waiting.
There is no waiting list for counselling services

The SHSCT has one permanent WTE Bereavement Midwife. The service is available 37.5 hours per week Monday – Friday from 9am to 5pm.

SHSCT Bereavement Midwife offers listening support following bereavement for women who experience mid trimester baby loss (12-24 weeks gestation) or stillbirth (>24 weeks gestation). Support is also provided for parents who have experienced a neonatal death (<28days old, or up to one year if they have been cared for in the neonatal unit).

Listening support focuses on providing a safe, empathetic space for someone to talk about their feelings and experiences, while counselling is a more structured, therapeutic process that aims to help individuals understand and resolve specific issues or problems. Listening support is

about offering comfort and validation, while counselling involves deeper exploration of thoughts, feelings, and behaviours.

Bereavement Midwives have additional training and expertise within their midwifery skill set supporting bereaved parents, signposting to charitable services and counselling support, and allowing time and space for families to talk about their experience of baby loss. They do not have counselling qualifications.

Listening support is offered over the phone and in person. A bereavement midwife will make contact with a bereaved mother, usually within two weeks of referral, although ideally sooner (allowing time for annual leave etc.) The timing of any in person contact is largely led by the bereaved parents and there is no waiting list for listening support. An appointment will usually be available within one week of request. In person listening support is offered at The Listening Rooms, Skeagh Cottage, which is a quiet non-clinical space, specifically designated for that purpose.

New referrals for listening service:

	2022	2023	2024
Total	52	125	108

Email: Foi.Team@Southerntrust.hscni.net