

FOI 3114

11th June 2025

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 – INFORMATION REQUEST

Can I please ask for all the information for the following questions in particular the Southern Health and Social Services trust?

1) How Many complaints including telephone, email, and writing letters have been made against the pediatric speech and language department.

Response:

Below is the total number of Paediatric SLT complaint by year which has been broken down further by year and type of complaint;

Paediatric SLT Complaints by year

Year	Total number of complaints
2020	6
2021	19
2022	19
2023	8
2024	9
2025	0
Total	61

Paediatric SLT complaints by year and Type of complaint

	Formal HSC Complaint	Informal HSC Complaint	Total
2020	4	2	6
2021	18	1	19
2022	15	4	19
2023	3	5	8
2024	3	6	9
2025	0	0	0
Total	43	18	61

2) How Many Complaints including all telephone, email, and writing letters have been made against the head of Speech and Language.

Response:

In relation to your request the Trust is providing a Neither Confirm Nor Deny (NCND) response and by virtue of Section 40 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA)

and are neither confirming nor denying whether we do or do not hold the information you seek.

Section 1 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) places two duties on public authorities.

Unless exemptions apply, the first duty at Section 1(1)(a) is to confirm or deny whether the information specified in the request is held. The second duty at Section 1(1)(b) is to disclose information that has been confirmed as being held.

Where exemptions are relied upon Section 17(1) of FOIA requires that we provide the applicant with a notice which

- a) states that fact,
- b) specifies the exemption(s) in question and
- c) states (if that would not otherwise be apparent) why the exemption applies.

The Trust can Neither Confirm Nor Deny that it holds the information relevant to your request as the duty in Section 1(1)(a) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 does not apply by virtue of the following exemption:

Section 40 (5B)(a)(i) – Personal Information - the duty to confirm or deny does not arise if to do so would contravene any of the data protection principles.

Section 40 is an absolute exemption, therefore it is not necessary to evidence the harm caused by disclosure nor is it necessary to carry out a public interest test in this case.

The release of information under Freedom of Information (FOI) is a release into the public domain and not just to the individual requesting the information. Once information is disclosed by FOI there is no control or limits as to who or how the information is shared with other individuals, therefore a release under FOI is considered a disclosure to the world in general. To confirm or deny that the Trust hold or do not hold information would in fact confirm information about an individual. This would amount to a release into the public domain of personal information about an individual and likely to cause distress. The individual would have no expectation that these details would be released into the public domain; therefore the Trust would breach its data protection obligations and be unfair to individuals.

However, this response should not be taken as evidence that the information you requested is held or not.

3) how much input is given to children with severe special needs by speech and language.

Response:

Speech and language therapy is delivered according to assessed need in line with evidence-based practice. Even if the term 'severe special needs' was defined, this question would require a manual case note audit of large numbers of children and young people. In order to provide this information a significant manual trawl of records from a number of sources is required. The cost of locating and retrieving the information exceeds the "appropriate limit" as stated in the Freedom of Information (Fees and Appropriate Limit) Regulations 2004. In order to obtain this information, it would exceed the £450 limit and is therefore cost prohibitive.

In addition, it would not be appropriate to search through individual patient records for the purposes for responding to a FOI request, there would be no patient expectation that medical records would be used in this way.

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