

FOI 3180

26th June 2025

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 – INFORMATION REQUEST

I would like to request information with regards to the number of complaints made against children's social workers in the Southern Trust. The information which I request is how many complaints against children's social workers in the Southern Trust in the last 5 years.

I also request that it is broken down into:

**FIT,
LAC/ CIC,
14+,
16+,
parenting services,
fostering services.**

Response:

Please find below the total number of complaints raised in relation to children’s social work services (to include informal, enquiries, point of service delivery and formal) by year (up until 17 June 2025). There is currently no robust system within the Trust to accurately extrapolate which of these related specifically to complaints against individual social workers. Social work complaints are often complex in nature and multifaceted. To extrapolate this data, this would require a manual review of each complaint. 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.

Under section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, Public Authorities are not obliged to comply with an information request where to do so would exceed the cost limit.

Total number of complaint by year:

	Total by Year
2020	74
2021	68
2022	76
2023	65
2024	63
(up to 17.06.25) 2025	42

Total	388
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Total number of complaints by year and Service Area:

	14+ Service	Children in Care Service	Family Placement Services	Gateway & Family Intervention Service
2020	<5	14	<5	56
2021	<5	16	<5	50
2022	7	16	<5	50
2023	<5	12	<5	48
2024	<5	13	7	42
(up to 17.06.25) 2025	<5	5	<5	28

*16+ is known as 14+ Service

**Parenting and Fostering Services fall under Family Placement Service

The Trust has a legal duty to protect patient confidentiality and, in line with this duty, the figure <5 has been provided where figures are very low. This is because of the potential risk of identification of an individual. In reaching this decision the Trust has taken into account the small geographical area which the Trust serves and the sensitivity of the information requested. In addition, the Trust has taken into account the fact that all information disclosed in response to an FOI is disclosed to the 'world at large' and is published on the Trust website.

S 40 (2) (third party information) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 has been applied to exempt the exact figures from disclosure. The Trust does not consider the disclosure of the information to be fair to the individuals concerned as there is the potential risk of identification of an individual(s) which they would not expect, and which would therefore breach the fairness element of the first principle of the Data Protection Act 2018

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