

FOI 3346

21st October 2025**FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 – INFORMATION REQUEST**

For the purpose of this Freedom of Information request domiciliary care is defined as a service which provides support to individuals in their own homes rather than a residential care setting. The term has now changed from domiciliary Care to Home Care.

Information Requested:

1. Is the provision of domiciliary care to the Trust by the independent/private sector covered by a framework agreement – and if so, which framework agreement covers this provision?

Response:

The Southern Trust operates a local approved provider framework for the provision of Independent Sector Provider Home Care services.

2. If the provision of domiciliary care services to the trust by the independent sector is not covered by a formal framework agreement, please detail how the trust engages with and contracts with independent providers of domiciliary care services.

Response:

See response to question 1 above.

3. Please explain how the trust decides to use an independent domiciliary care provider rather than provide the care package to the individual directly.

Response:

The Southern Trust operates a Care Bureau process to source a care package. This involves, in the first instance sending the request for a care package to the In-House Service. If the In-House Home Care service is unable to provide the care package, Care Bureau email the request to the Independent Sector Providers that cover the post code area. If multiple providers can offer the care package, a set of agreed rules are used to decide who the care package is secured with, namely

1. who was the previous care package accepted by
2. who can offer most of the requested visits and

3. who can commence the care package first.

4. In the most recently available 12-month period please detail the total Trust spend on the provision of domiciliary care services in patient's own homes by independent/private sector providers. Please analyse this expenditure detailing the name of each provider used to provide these services, the amount spent with each of these providers and if relevant whether each independent provider is on or off framework/contract.

Response:

Section 43 – Commercial Interests

The Trust is unable to provide this information for reasons of commercial confidentiality. This information is considered exempt from release into the public domain under section 43(2) (commercial interests) of the Freedom of Information Act. The Trust believes that releasing the information requested into the public domain under the FOI Act could be prejudicial to competition in future tendering processes.

There is a public interest in ensuring that service providers can compete fairly in the marketplace. There is also a public interest in ensuring that there is fair competition for public sector contracts.

Release of this information into the public domain may have a detrimental impact on the business relationship between the Trust and the provider, including future contracts. Having considered the public interest arguments in relation to this information, it is the Trust view that the balance lies in favour of non-disclosure therefore there is a greater public interest in withholding the information and not releasing into the public domain under the FOI Act.

5. The number of patients in receipt of a domiciliary care (home care) package within the Trust.

Response:

It should be noted that the Trust supports service users to remain at home, through the provision of a range of services, that can be broadly described as home care packages. The Number of Service Users in receipt of a Home Care Package in September 2025 was 6525.

(NB: This figure of 6525 includes those clients who receive either one or a mix of the following options, a domiciliary care (home care) package, a Self-Directed Support (Direct Payment), a Short Break or attend a Day Care placement).

However, those in receipt of what is traditionally known as a domiciliary care (home care) package in their own home, equated to 4781 in September 2024.

6. The number of patients currently waiting for domiciliary care packages in the Trust area.

Response:

There are 664 clients waiting a domiciliary care (home care) Package of Care, as of close of play on Friday 26 September 2025.

7. Please provide the contact details of the individual and/or department that manages the trust's relationship with independent domiciliary care providers.

Response:

The Trust has considered this request carefully and is withholding the name and direct contact details for the requested positions. This is because we consider this information exempt under section 36(2) (c) of the Freedom of Information Act.

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

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.

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 contact details can be found under specific services [Southern Health & Social Care Trust | Southern Health & Social Care Trust](#).

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.

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