

FOI 3364

13th October 2025

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 – INFORMATION REQUEST

Since the start of offering abortions in the North, how many children have been born alive following an abortion per year and what are the procedures in place when this occurs.

Please see below response for the Southern Health and Social Care Trust:

2020	<5
2021	<5
2022	7
2023	<5
2024	<5
2025	<5

The Trust has a legal duty to protect patient confidentiality, 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. 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 redacted information from disclosure. The Trust does not consider the disclosure of the redacted 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.

Following a live birth at any gestation where survival focused care is not appropriate (such as following a termination of pregnancy) staff follow guidance from MBRRACE (2020), RCOG (2023) and BAPM (2020), which focus on recognising signs of life in extremely premature babies, providing comfort care for a baby and emotional support for parents and wider family as required. Where it is expected that a baby may be born alive following termination of pregnancy antenatal discussions should include the recommendation of feticide.

A live birth following termination of pregnancy will require notification to the Coroner and both birth and death will need to be registered. A Medical Certificate of Cause of Death will be completed by an obstetrician, where there was not significant input from a paediatric doctor.

An outline of the policy that outlines what actions are taken in that situation.

Response:

Please see attached policy – we refer you to Appendix 1 within this document for actions to be taken in this situation.

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