

FOI 3516

6th January 2026

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 – INFORMATION REQUEST

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- 1. The number of service users who are non-verbal and have learning difficulties by age within care/nursing home settings, within your trust.**

Response:

This information is not recorded centrally and therefore retrieving it would involve a manual search of individual patient records which would be in excess of 18hrs. As such we cannot provide this information as 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 from a number of individual patient records 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.

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.

- 2. Details of any special measures that have been implemented by your trust to help manage the care, communication and wellbeing of these service users.**

Response:

In SHSCT, there is a specialist Speech & Language Therapy (SALT) service for adults with Learning Disabilities. The aim of this SLT service is to enable others to address barriers to communication that service users with learning disabilities experience. Thus SALT's provide training to the wider workforce to enhance interventions and maximise the opportunities for positive intervention.

- SALTs provide assessment, diagnosis & treatment of speech, language, communication.

- SALTs devise individual management plans & recommendations on how best to support individuals with communication support needs. These are available to all staff carrying out interventions with service users to aid their intervention. They identify communication strengths & support needs as well as recommendations on how to support communication.
- SALTs provide intervention to service users in a variety of ways through one-to-one programmes, group programmes & indirect therapy via communication partners & MDT working.
- SALTs are specialists in providing information that is accessible to the needs of people with learning disabilities. This is done through production of easy read resources, social stories, visual schedules, time-tables, first & then boards & communication books/ wallets/ boards.
- SALTs provide specialist assessment, intervention and the provision of appropriate alternative and argumentative communication (AAC) to adults with learning disability

SALTs within SHSCT promote the Royal College of Speech & Language Therapists (RCSLT) 5 good communication standards which identify reasonable adjustments to communication that individuals with learning disability and/or autism should expect in specialist hospital and residential settings – Please refer to attachment 1. These standards were developed in response to the Winterbourne View scandal, which exposed systemic failure in communication and care for people with learning disabilities and autistic people. They define what good communication support should look like across health and social care, ensuring individuals are listened to, understood and able to make informed choices about their lives. We have provided information & awareness session to service users, staff & carers.

- There are identified staff who are communication champions in some of the Trust's & private facilities including Day Care, supported Living, nursing homes & private Day care facilities who attend meetings chaired by SLT were resources, training, Information, good practice is shared & promotion of good communication occurs. Please refer to attachment 2 which outlines the role of Communication Champion.
- SALT have identified a recommended training at induction & shared key links and resources to support staff increase their knowledge & skills – Please refer to attachment 3.
- SALT provide generic training to staff / families & carers including Makaton tasters, Makaton level 1 & 2, Talking Mats awareness sessions, Easy read training, Introduction into inclusive communication.
- SALT provide bespoke training to staff/ families & carers re individual communication advice and strategies

- SALT carry out capacity assessments as part of the mental capacity process and/or provide support / accessible resources to colleagues when completing these.
- SALT utilise specialist skills to ensure service users can make decisions & be involved in making choices & giving opinions via use of strategies e.g. talking mats. SHSCT have specialist SALT staff who are Makaton regional tutors & talking Mats trainers who provide this training to the wider workforce.
- SALT are part of the specialist Community Assessment & Rehabilitation Service (CARS) & forensic team providing assessment, intervention & support to service users, families/ carers & staff when they are going through a period of crisis or presenting with behaviours of concern.

People with learning disabilities face a range of communication barriers. These are often due to the environment or how other people communicate with them. Speech and language therapy helps remove these barriers by promoting inclusive communication and accessible information. It supports communication-friendly environments; develops the communication skills of those working with and supporting people with learning disabilities; and promotes and creates accessible information so it can be shared in ways that everyone can understand.

Email: Foi.Team@Southerntrust.hscni.net