

FOI 3633

13th March 2026

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 – INFORMATION REQUEST

Please provide the total number of CONTACTS received by Children's Social Care Services each year in the last ten years (where figures are available).

For the avoidance of doubt, this refers to all contacts (by phone, email, webform or in person) made by individuals or agencies. We are NOT requesting "Referrals" (as detailed in table C1 of the Dept for Education's Children in Need tables (<https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/children-in-need/2025>)). Based on available data we have from some local authorities they have received a ratio of between 5 and 10 contacts for each referral recorded.

Response:

The Trust does not hold this data in a readily available format and to provide it would require a manual trawl of individual service user records.

As such we cannot provide this information as the cost of locating and retrieving this 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 service user's 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 service users' records for the purposes for responding to a FOI request, there would be no service user expectation that social care records would be used in this way.

Furthermore, under Section 16 of the Freedom of Information Act, we can advise that it would require an extensive manual review of all service users' files just to ascertain if information relevant to your request is held. As such, we advise that there is no way to refine this request to bring it within the appropriate limit.

Email: Foi.Team@Southerntrust.hscni.net