

FOI3749

11th May 2026

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 – INFORMATION REQUEST

Under Article 6A5 of the Housing (Northern Ireland) Order 1988 (as amended by the Housing (Amendment) Act (Northern Ireland), various agencies shall take the homelessness strategy into account in the exercise of their functions. As a named agency under the 1988 Order, please provide any information held which relates to how the homelessness strategy is taken into account in the exercise of the Southern Health and Social Care Trust's functions. Please include any information held during the period of the current Homelessness Strategy, which began in 2022.

Response

The Southern Health and Social Care Trust demonstrate taking account of the Homelessness Strategy through a coordinated, preventative, and multi-agency approach, with a strong focus on care-experienced children and young people, particularly those aged 14+ and 16–18 years who are at risk of, or experiencing, homelessness.

Prevention and Early Intervention

- SHSCT prioritises early identification and prevention of homelessness, particularly through its Youth Homeless Service (YHS).
- The YHS delivers safeguarding-led, statutory support in line with Article 27 of the Children (NI) Order 1995, including UNOCINI assessments, family stabilisation, and exploration of family-based or supported accommodation solutions.
- Homelessness prevention is embedded into social work practice, with named social workers providing consistent, individualised support.

•

Accommodation and Tenancy Support Pathways

- A Community Living Team (14 Plus Service) provides flexible tenancy support, including evenings and weekends, to support young people transitioning from care to independent living.
- SHSCT offers a range of planned accommodation options, including:
 - STAY Supported Lodgings
 - Trust Transition Properties
 - Jointly Supported Accommodation
 - Going the Extra Mile Scheme
 - Temporary Transition Accommodation to prevent inappropriate hostel use while awaiting NIHE allocations
- Recruitment of Supported Lodgings providers remains a core strategic focus.

Strategic Planning and Partnership Working

- SHSCT engages with the Local Planning Partnership Group, meeting bimonthly with statutory, voluntary, and accommodation providers to develop multi-agency housing solutions for young people at risk of homelessness.
- Monthly Trust Resource Panels ensure forward planning and coordinated decision-making for care leavers requiring accommodation beyond age 18 and engagement with Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE)
- The Trust works closely with the NIHE and voluntary sector partners to coordinate assessment, planning, and long-term housing solutions, reducing the risk of repeat homelessness.

Skills, Independence, and Sustainability

- The TASKE Service provides groupwork to care-experienced young people focusing on practical life skills to support tenancy sustainment.
- A dedicated Employability Service supports education, training, and employment, helping young people develop financial stability necessary to maintain housing.

Adult Community Services and Mental Health and Disability Services Response:

In addition to the services as outlined above, the role of the Homeless Health Care Specialist Nurse has taken into account the Homelessness Strategy (2022-27).

Operational Practice

The Inclusion Service – Homeless Health Care commenced within the Southern Health and Social Care Trust (SHSCT) in March 2022 following the recruitment of a 1.0 WTE Homeless Health Nurse Specialist (Band 7). The operational hours are Monday to Thursday 8am-6pm excluding Weekends and Bank Holidays. The Service is based at HSC Russell Drive Offices and provides Trust-wide coverage across a large and diverse geographical area, encompassing both urban and rural localities.

All referrals received are triaged and screened on a case-by-case basis depending on current service resources. The Homeless Health Nurse Specialist delivers care to individuals residing in six temporary hostel accommodations, representing approximately 117 beds, as well as people experiencing street homelessness.

The Homeless Health Care Specialist Nurse completes a Health Assessment, which will identify Service User nursing need such as, health promotion advice, signposting, safety netting and onward referrals, as appropriate. Further clinical input may be required such as, venipuncture, wound management, access to blood borne virus/sexual health screening; needle exchange and Naloxone provision.

Partnership Working

The Homeless Health Nurse Specialist works in partnership with several in-house services such as Community Additions Team, Genitourinary Medicine, Mental Health Services, Physical Disability Services and District Nursing Team/Treatment rooms. The Homeless Health Nurse Specialist also engages with the following external stakeholders; Regional Inclusion Services, Public Health Agency, Police Service of Northern Ireland, Policing and Community Safety Partnership, Royal Victoria Hospital Hepatology department, all SHSCT hostels, Step 2 Partnership, EXTERN, Northern Ireland Housing Executive, General Practitioners, Dentists across SHSCT, Jobs and Benefits department, Criminal Justice System Custody Nursing and GP Practices.

Governance and Oversight

The Homeless Health Care Specialist Nurse engages in regional meetings, strategy groups and operational meetings where homelessness is part of wider health and social care planning.

Information Held

The Homeless Health Care Specialist Nurse ensures that the Homelessness Strategy (2022-27) is reflected in the development of relevant policies, procedures, and guidance documents, and that its principles are embedded within day-to-day operational practices. The Homeless Health Nurse Specialist records clinical notes, assessments, care plans and relevant Service User information within the Encompass system, in line with professional and governance requirements.

Email: FOI.team@southerntrust.hscni.net