

FOI 3851

17th July 2026

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 – INFORMATION REQUEST

Please provide copies of any documents produced, commissioned, received, considered or relied upon since 1 January 2019 relating to

- **Workforce attendance requirements;**
- **Workplace location strategies;**
- **Office attendance policies;**
- **Hybrid working policies;**
- **Remote working policies;**
- **Workforce centralisation;**
- **Office location decisions; and**
- **Associated workforce and accommodation policies.**

This request includes, but is not limited to:

1. **Equality Screenings.**
2. **Equality Impact Assessments (EQIAs).**
3. **Disability Impact Assessments.**
4. **Rural Needs Assessments, Rural Needs screening forms, Rural impact assessments and Rural proofing exercises**
5. **Equality, disability or Rural Needs advice provided internally or externally**
6. **Equality, disability or Rural Needs consultation responses.**
7. **Reviews, reports, assessments, analyses or evaluations examining the impact of the above policies on:**
 - **Protected groups;**
 - **Individuals with disabilities;**
 - **Staff requiring reasonable adjustments**
 - **Rural communities**
 - **Carers; and**
 - **Groups protected under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998**
8. **Briefing notes, submissions, Board papers, governance papers, decision papers, options appraisals, business cases, minutes, correspondence or other decision-making documents which reference:**
 - **Equality considerations;**
 - **Disability considerations;**

- Reasonable adjustments;
- Accessibility;
- Section 75 obligations
- Rural Needs obligations under the Rural Needs Act (Northern Ireland) 2016; or
- The impact of the above policies on staff, service users or communities.

9. Reviews, reports, assessments or analyses examining the impact of workforce attendance requirements, workplace location strategies, workforce centralisation, office location decisions, hybrid working policies or remote working policies on rural communities.

Where documents have been updated, superseded or revised, please provide the most recent version together with any previous versions produced since 1 January 2019.

Response

The information requested spans several different sources, including Trust Board papers, corporate planning documents, estates/accommodation records and email correspondence.

The Southern Health and Social Care Trust estimates that the cost of complying with all of the information requested would exceed the appropriate limit as set out in the Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004.

However, we have been able to provide some information to your request, please see below. Some of the policies / strategies requested the Trust do not have in place, those that we do are signposted or attached.

Please provide copies of any documents produced, commissioned, received, considered or relied upon since 1 January 2019 relating to:

- ***Workforce attendance requirements;***
- ***Workplace location strategies;***
- ***Office attendance policies;***
- ***Hybrid working policies;*** Flexible working policy attached (Attachment 1).
- ***Remote working policies;***
- ***Workforce centralisation;***
- ***Office location decisions;*** office decisions are made locally as and when the decision arises
- ***Associated workforce and accommodation policies.***

Much of this information is found in the Trust Corporate Annual Reports

Please see below hyperlink:

[Annual Reports | Southern Health & Social Care Trust](#)

This request includes, but is not limited to:

1. Equality Screenings. Available on SHSCT website -

[SHSCT Quarterly Screening Reports](#)

2. **Equality Impact Assessments (EQIAs).** Available on SHSCT website –

[EQIA Screenings](#)

[Policies and Procedures | Southern Health & Social Care Trust](#)

3. **Disability Impact Assessments.** We do not conduct Disability Impact Assessments

4. **Rural Needs Assessments, Rural Needs screening forms, Rural impact assessments and Rural proofing exercises.** Available on SHSCT website –

[Rural Needs Monitoring Reports and Impact Assessments](#)

5. **Equality, disability or Rural Needs advice provided internally or externally.**

Advice is provided by a range of internal sources including management, senior leadership, Trust Board, Human Resources, Equality through a range of mechanisms. There are regular meetings with managers and staff, feedback on Equality Screenings, Rural Needs and Disability/ Reasonable adjustments. We also provide guidance and seek additional professional support from the Direct Legal Service (Trust inhouse solicitors) The Equality Commission for NI, Employers for Disability NI and other support organisations such as Disability Action. We have in place a regional [Disability toolkit](#), adhere to DDA legislation, regional Equality and Disability Action Plans [Consultations | Southern Health & Social Care Trust](#) and within the Trust we have in place a Disability Advocate.

[Disability Advocate role established in Trust | Southern Health & Social Care Trust](#)

6. **Equality, disability or Rural Needs consultation responses** - Equality and Rural Needs info can be found on the Trust website Available on SHSCT website –

[Rural Needs Monitoring Reports and Impact Assessments](#) / Available on SHSCT website -

[EQIA Screenings](#)

[Consultations | Southern Health & Social Care Trust](#)

7. **Reviews, reports, assessments, analyses or evaluations examining the impact of the above policies on:**

- o Protected groups;
- o Individuals with disabilities;
- o Staff requiring reasonable adjustments;
- o Rural communities;
- o Carers; and
- o Groups protected under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

Any relevant information would again be found within the links already highlighted.

8. Briefing notes, submissions, Board papers, governance papers, decision papers, options appraisals, business cases, minutes, correspondence or other decision-making documents which reference:
- o Equality considerations;
 - o Disability considerations;
 - o Reasonable adjustments;
 - o Accessibility;
 - o Section 75 obligations;
 - o Rural Needs obligations under the Rural Needs Act (Northern Ireland) 2016; or
- The impact of the above policies on staff, service users or communities.**

An annual progression Report is submitted annually which is available on the SHSCT website – [Equality Scheme Progress Report](#), as well as the annual Fair Employment Monitoring Return submitted to the Equality Commission for NI [Company data overview | Equality Commission NI](#) and Article 55 which is submitted to the Equality Commission every three years.

[About Trust Board | Southern Health & Social Care Trust](#) – Trust Board papers and Minutes of meetings which includes discussion on equality issues as and when required. Our Corporate Plan [Our Vision and Strategy 2030 | Southern Health & Social Care Trust](#) and Annual Reports [Annual Reports | Southern Health & Social Care Trust](#)

9. **Reviews, reports, assessments or analyses examining the impact of workforce attendance requirements, workplace location strategies, workforce centralisation, office location decisions, hybrid working policies or remote working policies on rural communities.**

As above

Where documents have been updated, superseded or revised, please provide the most recent version together with any previous versions produced since 1 January 2019.

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