

FOI 2505

4<sup>th</sup> July 2024

## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 – INFORMATION REQUEST

Please can you answer the following questions relating to the workforce/staffing system(s) you currently use.

Response:

Agency					
	For each of the staff group categories:	Medical and Dental	Nursing and HCAs	AHPs and HSS	Admin and Clerical
1	Do you have an <b>in-house temporary staffing team</b> to manage your <b>agency</b> OR is this <b>outsourced</b> to a company? (In-house/Outsourced)	In-house staffing team	In-house staffing team	In-house staffing team	In-house staffing team
2	If outsourced, what is the name of this company?	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
3	If outsourced, what was the start date for the contract with this provider? (dd/mm/yyyy)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
4	If outsourced, what is the expiry date for the contract with this provider? (dd/mm/yyyy)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A



<p>5</p> <p>In total, how many Agency shift hours were worked in 2023? (most recent 12 month period)</p>	<p>This information is not recorded centrally and therefore retrieving it would involve a manual search of staff records. 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 departments it would exceed the £450 limit and is therefore cost prohibitive.</p> <p>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</p>	<p>511,554</p>	<p>This information is not recorded centrally and therefore retrieving it would involve a manual search of staff records. 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 departments it would exceed the £450 limit and is therefore cost prohibitive.</p> <p>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</p>	<p>This information is not recorded centrally and therefore retrieving it would involve a manual search of staff records. 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 departments it would exceed the £450 limit and is therefore cost prohibitive.</p> <p>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</p>



For each of the staff group categories:		Medical and Dental	Nursing and HCAs	AHPs and HSS	Admin and Clerical
5	Do you use agency technology (VMS (vendor management system)) to manage the cascading of vacancies to one or more agencies? (Yes/No/Not Applicable)	Yes	Yes	No	No
6	If the response was YES to question 5, what is the name of your VMS (vendor management system) technology?	*Section 31(1)(a) Law enforcement– leaving the Southern HSC Trust, Patients, Clients & Staff more vulnerable to crime	*Section 31(1)(a) Law enforcement– leaving the Southern HSC Trust, Patients, Clients & Staff more vulnerable to crime	N/A	N/A
7	What was the contract start date for the provider you currently use? (dd/mm/yyyy)	The system was launched in 2012.	01.01.2024	N/A	N/A
8	What is the contract expiry date for the provider you currently use? (dd/mm/yyyy)	There is no expiry date for our bank system, as it is an internal HSC System.	21.12.2028	N/A	N/A

Direct Engagement				
	For each of the staff group categories:	Medical and Dental	AHPs and HSS	Admin and Clerical
1	Do you undertake direct engagement (DE) arrangements to make savings on VAT on agency workers? (YES/NO)	No	No	No
2	What is the name of your DE provider/technology?	N/A	N/A	N/A
3	What is the contract expiry date for the provider/technology that you currently use for direct engagement? (dd/mm/yyyy)	N/A	N/A	N/A

**\*Section 31(1)(a)(b) – Law enforcement**

**Harm**

The provision of health & social care services in the Southern HSC Trust is information led with the recording of all service user information as well as staff information. The recording of this information is fundamental to the provision of services and the management of our health and social care services. The majority of the information we hold, is electronic with numerous information systems supporting the delivery of our services such as appointment booking, clinical systems supporting the delivery of care in theatres, laboratories, radiology, intensive care unit as well as supporting social care in children and adult service, mental health and disability.

All of this electronic data, whether held on premise or using cloud services is extremely valuable. Therefore by providing information on any information system, infrastructure or networks would be useful to cyber criminals by enabling them to determine any vulnerabilities that might exist or enable them to use targeted phishing attacks.

**Factors Favouring disclosure**

The public are entitled to know how public funds are spent and how resources are used within Health & Social Care. By providing information to the public on the information systems, network and infrastructure this would provide assurance to the public that the information they provide is being managed, stored and

used in a secure way. This information could also potentially reduce costs and public sector spend by introducing more competition in the procurement of systems and infrastructure components.

#### **Factors Favouring Nondisclosure**

The disclosure of this information could compromise the ability of the Trust to function with increased cyber attacks and potential ransom attacks. Disclosure could compromise the Trusts (and wider HSC) tactics in terms of Network Security increasing the risk of a Cyber attack.

Whilst security measures are in place, no network is completely secure and releasing information which may increase the vulnerability of the Trust's network. This increase in vulnerability will require more resources within the Cyber Security Team to manage and address any threats, thus reducing their ability to provide a proactive approach to network security.

The cumulative effect of releasing information in relation the Trust (and wider HSC) IT infrastructure and linking this with other information could potentially provide cyber criminals the opportunity to conduct a successful attack on the HSC network.

The HSC has a duty of care to the population in terms of protecting both the information it holds, but also protecting information systems which are critical to the delivery of safe and effective care. Without the availability of these system, information would not be available for life saving diagnostics, delivery of emergency care and the safeguarding of children and adults. Release of information to the word at large could compromise patient and service user safety.

#### **Balancing Test**

For the public interest test, issues that favour release need to be measured against the issues that favour non-disclosure. The public interest is not what interests the public, or an individual, but what will be greater good for the community as a whole.

The Trust is responsible for the provision and management of health and social care for the population of the Southern Trust area, the security of the Trust's network and infrastructure is critical to enable the Trust to deliver services. The maintenance of services is of paramount importance to the Trust, securing highly sensitive information about its network.

The Trust must protect its network and information from any cyber threat that would impact on the operation of the services it provides. The Trust objective is to provide high quality, safe and effective



care and where there is a risk to that objective the Trust is duty bound to prevent the release of information which may assist those persons who are intent on committing a cyber crime. At this time, it would not be in the public interest to release this information. The Southern HSC Trust will not disclose information that could harm its ability to provide a critical service and compromise its ability to deliver high quality, safe and effective care to the population.

Email: [Foi.Team@Southerntrust.hscni.net](mailto:Foi.Team@Southerntrust.hscni.net)