

20 January 2025

Our Ref: FOI 338

Dear

**Freedom of Information Act 2000
Information in Relation to Medical Agency Locums 2022 - 2024**

I am writing to confirm that the South Eastern Health & Social Care Trust (the Trust) has now completed its search for information relating to above which you requested on 8 November 2024. Please accept my apologies for the delay in responding to your request. Thank you for your understanding and forbearance.

A response questions 1 to 5 has been provided by the Finance & Estates Directorate and is attached in Appendix A.

In relation to a **breakdown by supplier/agency**, the Trust has decided not to release the information that is held for the following reasons:

The information requested in questions 1-4, **breakdown by supplier/agency**, is exempt from release under Section 43 (2) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

This is a qualified exemption and so a Public Interest Test was carried out to decide if the information should be released or not. Having weighed up the factors for and against release, it was decided to withhold this information because:

Section 43 (2) - (Prejudice to Commercial Interests, of the Freedom of Information Act 2000). The disclosure of such information would, or would be likely to, prejudice the commercial interests of any person (including the public authority holding it).

In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 this statement acts as a Refusal Notice in respect of a **breakdown by supplier/agency**.

If you are unhappy as to how this request has been handled, you have the right to seek a review within the Trust in the first instance. You should write to the Information Governance Department, Lough House, Ards Community Hospital (informationgovernance@setrust.hscni.net) within two months of the date of this response and your complaint will be considered and a response provided, within 20 working days of receipt.

If, after receiving a response, you remain unhappy, you can refer your complaint to the Information Commissioner at The Information Commissioner's Office –Northern Ireland, 3rd Floor, 14 Cromac Place, Belfast, BT7 2JB. It is important to note that if you refer any matter to the Information Commissioner, you will need to show evidence of having gone through the Trust's internal review procedure to try to resolve the matter with the Trust in the first instance.

If you have any queries about this letter, please do not hesitate to contact me. Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

Yours sincerely

Caroline Degans
Information Governance Officer

In relation to your supply of locum Doctors for each grade and specialty per month, please could you provide the answers to the requests below for the following periods?

- i. Financial year 2022/2023***
- ii. Financial year 2023/2024***
- iii. Period from April - September 2024***

Please note: Due to the introduction of a new booking system for Locum Doctors the Trust is only able to provide information for the period of April – September 2024

- Q1. Please confirm the total number of vacancy requirements given out to framework and non-framework agencies for each agency.***
- Q2. Please confirm the total number of shifts given out to framework and non-framework agencies for each agency***

A1&2 The Trust use agency (locum) doctors to fill gaps in rotas due to vacancies, sickness etc. and it is these individual assignments of varying lengths which will be put out to agencies to fill, rather than specific jobs. It is therefore not possible to provide a breakdown of jobs by specialty and grade.

Please see Table 1 for the total vacancy requirements given out to framework and non-framework Agencies.

Table 1

Month	Framework	Non-Framework	Total
April 2024	366	31	397
May 2024	392	29	421
June 2024	359	30	389
July 2024	395	49	444
August 2024	389	30	419
September 2024	303	22	325
Total	2204	191	2395

Q3. Please confirm the total number of agency locum doctors working per month, for each agency supplier divided between on and off framework.

A3. Please see Table 2 below, for the total number of agency locum doctors working per month divided between on and off framework.

Table 2

	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sep
Framework Headcount	170	170	176	170	198	172
Non Framework Head count	14	15	14	14	14	11
Total	184	185	190	184	212	183

Q4. Please confirm the total number of hours worked by agency locum doctors per month, for each agency supplier divided between on and off framework.

A4. Please see Table 3 below, for the total number of hours worked by agency locum doctors per month divided between on and off framework.

Table 3

	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sep
Framework Hrs	4399	4286.75	4217	4035.75	4762.5	4150.5
Non Framework Hrs	431.5	474.25	496.25	437.25	437.75	328.5
Total	4830.5	4761	4713.25	4473	5200.25	4479

Q5. Please confirm the total number of unfilled vacancies (excluding locum filled posts) per month.

A5. Consultant and locums are coded separately within in our financial systems and are collated in such a way that the Trust is unable to provide the number of unfilled vacancies (excluding locum filled posts) as requested.