

17 January 2025

**Our Ref:** FOI 429

Dear

**Freedom of Information Act 2000  
Information in relation to Band 5 Nursing Staff – Agency Spend**

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 16 December 2024. Please accept my apologies for the delay in responding to your request. Thank you for your understanding and forbearance.

A response to each of the questions raised has been provided by the Finance & Estates and People & Organisational Development Services Directorate and is attached in Appendix A.

Please be advised that in relation to question 1 I would like to advise you that the Trust has provided the overall total cost. The Trust decided not to release the cost breakdown by agency for the following reasons:

The 'breakdown of costs by agency' requested in question 1 is exempt from release under Section 43 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 the disclosure of such information would:

- c) (Section 43) Pose a significant threat to the integrity & operation of the digital systems on which the day-to-day business of the Trust relies

Section 43 – Commercial Interests

**Section 43(2)** states that information is exempt if its disclosure would, or would be likely to, prejudice the commercial interests of any person (including the public authority holding it). Disclosure of the requested information would leave the (name of organisation's) digital infrastructure at significant risk of cyber security attack. This would compromise the Trust ability to provide Health & Care Services and carry-on business-as usual should the digital systems be compromised.

In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 this letter acts as a Refusal Notice in respect of the breakdown of costs by agency requested in question 1.

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](mailto: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

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**Rebecca Manning**  
**Information Governance Officer**

**Q1. The amount spent with each agency supplier for the supply of Band 5 nurses to the trust for the most recently available 3-month accounting period detailing the name of each agency and the total spend with that agency.**

A1. The total spend was £3,786,493 for the period from 01 September 2024 to 30 November 2024.

**Q2. The amount spent within each clinical area of the trust for the same period, e.g. A&E, CCU, ICU/HDU, Theatres, Midwifery, Paediatrics, Mental Health, Oncology, Cardiology, Orthopedics etc.**

A2. Please see Table 1 for the spend broken down by clinical area.

Table 1

Discipline	Spend
Disability	£387,557
Elective and Radiology Services	£73,332
Healthcare in Prison	£184,297
Medicine & Cancer	£1,522,696
Mental Health	£487,730
Mental Health Services for Older People	£65,709
Primary and Integrated Care	£36,789
Surgery	£403,678
Unscheduled Care	£588,218
Woman and Acute Child Health	£36,489

**Q3. The number of Band 5 nursing hours filled by each agency that has supplied the trust in the most recently available 3-month accounting period detailing the name of each agency and the amount of hours that agency has filled during this period.**

A3. Please see Table 2 for the number of band 5 Nursing hours filled by each agency.

Table 2

Agency	October 2024	November 2024	December 2024
Allied & Clinical	877	736	812
Axis	1933	3870	4542
BFS	1938	1702	2247
Carrick	Nil	4	7
Direct Medics	7694	6306	6280
First Choice	49	38	4
Frontline	3709	3379	3255
Knockdean	188	134	133
Leadcare	Nil	15	Nil
Medlocums	1600	1707	1251
MPA Recruitment	58	93	108

NC Healthcare	4617	3934	5059
North West Care	54	71	Nil
Oberon	Nil	Nil	Nil
Peninsula	177	221	299
Placement Group	1462	1357	1396
Plan B	621	691	869
Pure HC	792	1081	1222
Red Group	176	121	Nil
TTM	680	645	731

**Q4. The number of Band 5 nursing hours filled by employment agencies within each clinical area of the trust for the same 3-month period e.g. A&E, CCU, ICU/HDU, Theatres, Midwifery, Paediatrics, Mental Health, Oncology, Cardiology, Orthopaedics etc.**

A4. Please see Table 3 for the number of Band 5 Nursing hours broken down by discipline.

Table 3

Discipline	October 2024	November 2024	December 2024
Disability	1019	1079	917
Elective and Radiology Services	674	401	381
Healthcare in Prison	1840	1788	854
Medicine & Cancer	13591	12434	14241
Mental Health	4385	3866	4351
Mental Health Service for Older People	499	274	403
Primary and Integrated Care	493	277	333
Surgery	2991	3686	3327
Unscheduled Care	4681	3573	5102
Woman and Acute Child Health	261	466	471