



9 January 2025

**Our Ref:** FOI 434

Dear

**Freedom of Information Act 2000  
Information in relation to Foster Carer Involvement**

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 23 December 2024.

A response to each of the questions raised has been provided by the Children's Services and Social Care Directorate and is attached in Appendix A.

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**

**Q1a. Does the Trust have a foster carer forum which meets regularly?**

A1a. No, the Trust does not have a foster carer forum.  
The Trust does have foster carer support groups which meet regularly however they are generally activity based meetings and minutes are not taken.  
Foster carers are actively involved in the Trust recruitment activity and attend recruitment events.  
There is foster carer representation on all of the Trust Fostering Panels.

**Q1b. Was this foster carer forum operational in 2023?****Q1c. Was this foster carer forum operational in 2024?****Q2. Please provide a copy of the Terms of Reference for any operational foster carer forum?****Q3. Please provide copies of the minutes or meeting notes of the foster carer forum for the years 2023 and 2024.****Q4. Please provide the number of foster carers involved in the foster carer forum? (Please provide a breakdown by kinship/ non-kinship carers)?**

A1b-4. In response to questions 1b to 4, please refer to A1a.

**Q5a. Please provide a list of foster care policies developed or reviewed in 2023?**

A5a. The Trust did not develop or review any foster care policies in 2023.

**Q5b. Please indicate if the foster carers forum was involved in the co-production of these policies?**

A5b. N/A. Please refer to A1a.

**Q6a. Please provide a list of foster care policies developed or reviewed in 2024?**

A6a. A new regional Kinship Placement Risk Assessment (KPRA) was developed regionally and became operational at the end of 2024.

The regional allegations pathway was reviewed and completed at the end of 2024.

**Q6b. Please indicate if the foster carers forum was involved in the co-production of these policies?**

A6b. Please refer to A1a.

**Q7a. Please provide a list of foster care policies currently being developed, reviewed or updated by the Trust?**

A7a. There are currently no foster care policies being developed, reviewed or updated by the Trust.

**Q7b. Please indicate if the foster carers forum was involved in the co-production of these policies?**

A7b. N/A. Please refer to A1a and A7a.

**Q7c. Please include the expected date of completion of the policy development or update?**

A7c. N/A. Please refer to A7a.

**Q8a. Has the Trust undertaken any reorganisation, restructuring or reconfiguration of its fostering services in 2023 or 2024?**

A8a. In 2024 the Trust made a decision to integrate the Intensive Support Fostering (ISF) Team into mainstream Support and Development Teams. This decision was based on the huge reduction in carers aligned to the ISF scheme and the number of social work staff allocated to the service.

**Q8b. Where foster carers consulted concerning these changes?**

A8b. No, the management of the change process deemed it not necessary to consult with the foster carers as the service they were and still are receiving would not be affected. The carers were notified of the changes and that the service for them would be unchanged.

**Q8c. Please provide a copy of the consultation report?**

A8c. N/A. Please refer to A8a.

**Q9a. Please provide a list of regional foster care policies (including strategies, frameworks, schemes, standards, and regulations) on which the foster carer forum has been consulted in the years 2023 and 2024?**

A9a. N/A. Please refer to A1a.

**Q9b. Please provide copies of any response or report submitted by the Foster Carer Forum or Trust foster carers on each of the regional policies.**

A9b. N/A. Please refer to A1a.