



10 December 2024

Our Ref: FOI 339

Dear

**Freedom of Information Act 2000
Information in relation to Temporary Nursing**

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 7 November 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 People and Organisational Development & Finance and Estates Directorate and is attached in Appendix A.

In relation to question 7, please be advised that the Trust can only provide the overall total Nursing Agency spend, from July 2024 to October 2024. To provide the spend broken down by each agency would be commercially sensitive.

The information requested in question 7, breakdown of spend by 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 the spend breakdown by agency in question 7.

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.



South Eastern Health
and Social Care Trust

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

Rebecca Manning
Information Governance Officer

Q1. Please confirm the number of shifts sent to agencies for fulfilment per month for Band 5 and Band 6 Nurses, broken down by specialty (e.g., A&E, ITU) from June 2024 to October 2024.

A1. Please see Table 1 for the number of shifts sent to agencies for Band 5 and Band 6 Nurses broken down by speciality from June 2024 to October 2024.

Table 1

Discipline	June 2024	July 2024	August 2024	September 2024	October 2024
Disability	119	124	97	114	110
Healthcare in Prison	249	237	213	237	275
Medicine & Cancer Services	1355	1540	1418	1418	1586
Mental Health	324	449	336	350	393
Mental Health Services for Older People	55	67	59	67	50
Primary and Integrated Care	37	47	64	49	41
Surgery & Elective	596	606	528	543	462
Unscheduled Care	589	568	519	537	501

Q2. Please confirm the number of shifts that were filled by agencies each month from June 2024 to October 2024.

A2. Please see Table 2 for the number of shifts filled by agencies from June 2024 to October 2024.

Table 2

June 2024	July 2024	August 2024	September 2024	October 2024
2682	2908	2705	2726	2966

Q3. Please confirm any specific days, weeks, or months during which agency usage is consistently highest.

A3. The demand for agency is consistent month on month. The peak demand periods are midweek day shifts, with Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursdays being the busiest.

Q4. Please provide the agency spend per month by nursing band (e.g., Band 5, Band 6) for agency nurses, from June 2024 to October 2024.

A4. Please see Table 3 for the Nursing agency spend by band from June 2024 to October 2024.

Table 3

Band	June 2024	July 2024	August 2024	September 2024	October 2024
Band 2	£327,418	£361,830	£243,322	£371,752	£456,694
Band 3	£147,122	£192,367	£166,465	£195,765	£313,148
Band 4	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	£667
Band 5	£1,300,867	£1,275,437	£899,820	£1,221,319	£1,912,309
Band 6	£30,485	£43,407	£40,190	£41,290	£41,026
Total	£1,805,893	£1,873,043	£1,349,798	£1,830,128	£2,723,846

Q5. Please provide a breakdown of the filled Nursing shifts by agency on a monthly basis over the period from June 2024 to October 2024.

A5. Please see Table 4 for filled Nursing Shifts from June 2024 to October 2024.

Table 4

Agency	June 2024	July 2024	August 2024	September 2024	October 2024
Norther West & Support Ltd T/A NW Recruitment Company	Nil	Nil	Nil	7	8
Red Group Personnel Ltd	Nil	Nil	9	9	16
Plan B Healthcare Ltd	11	31	30	48	56
Medlocums Recruitment Ltd	133	115	116	156	155
TTM Healthcare Ltd	67	79	48	58	66
MPA Recruitment Ltd	Nil	Nil	3	13	10
Axis Nursing Agency Ltd	297	364	390	431	475
Pure Healthcare Group Ltd	4	17	16	45	73
Direct Medics Ltd	472	519	547	639	476
First Choice Selection Services Ltd	3	9	5	6	3
Knockdene Healthcare Ltd	21	13	19	15	20
BFS Healthcare Ltd	132	151	181	173	178
Allied & Clinical Recruitments Ltd	56	64	82	79	82
Carrik Care Ltd	4	1	1	1	Nil
Frontline Recruitment Group Ltd	396	424	380	372	420
Peninsula Care Services (NI) Ltd	32	54	38	25	22
NC Healthcare Ltd	600	607	580	485	483
Pulsecare T/A Oberon Agency	307	260	Nil	Nil	Nil
The Placement Group Healthcare Ltd T/A JustNurses	159	194	183	168	141



Q6. Please confirm the number of Nursing hours filled by off-framework agencies, broken down by month, between June 2024 and October 2024.

A6. There were no off-framework agencies used for Nursing staff from June 2024 to October 2024.

Q7. Please provide details of the Trust's spend per month for each nursing agency supplier during the period of June 2024 to October 2024.

A7. Please see Table 5 for the Trusts total spend for Nursing agencies from June 2024 to October 2024.

Table 5

June 2024	July 2024	August 2024	September 2024	October 2024
£1,805,893.52	£1,873,043.81	£1,349,798.55	£1,830,128.04	£2,723,846.23

Q8. Please confirm if a Preferred Supplier List (PSL) or tiered system is in place for Nursing agency engagement.

A8. A Tiered agency escalation is in place.

Q9. How many different agencies does the Trust engage with monthly to fill nursing shifts, and is there a limit on the number of agencies used?

A9. The Trust sends unfilled duties to 25 Registered Nursing Agencies. This is the maximum number of Registered Nurse Agencies the Trust use, as per the regional agency framework.

Q10. Does the Trust have a projected agency usage plan for the coming year, and are there specific goals for reducing agency dependency?

A10. The Trust Agency Reduction Oversight Group regularly evaluate agency usage and set the strategic direction for overall reliance on agency.

Q11. If you answered yes to the above question, what are they?

A11. Towards Zero Agency.



South Eastern Health
and Social Care Trust

Q12. *Is there a long-term strategy in place to reduce agency nursing costs or transition to alternative staffing models?*

A12. The regional policy, as directed by the Minister for Health in 2023, is to reduce Nursing Agency expenditure towards zero if possible.

Q13. *If you answered yes to the above question, what are they?*

A13. Towards Zero Agency.