



South Eastern Health  
and Social Care Trust

Information Governance

14 February 2025

**Our Ref:** FOI 481

Dear

**Freedom of Information Act 2000  
Information in relation to Advocacy**

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 17 January 2025.

A response to each of the questions raised has been provided by the Adult Services & Prison Healthcare 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**

***I would like a copy of your policy for the below listed:***

***If you do not have a policy then provide what document you use to guide and monitor the independent advocacy process.***

***Q1a. Independent advocacy for adults with a learning disability.***

A1a. The Adult Learning Disability Service does not hold a policy or document in relation to independent advocacy.  
A contract review is completed on an annual basis.

***Q1b. Independent advocacy for adults with a mental health condition.***

A1b. The Adults Mental health Service does not hold a policy or document in relation to independent advocacy.  
All contracted services have regular contract monitoring arrangements in place. This is generally twice yearly meetings which review the monthly data supplied and performance against purchased service.

***Q1c. Independent advocacy for adults with dementia.***

A1c. The Adults Service for Dementia/Alzheimer's does not hold a policy or document in relation to independent advocacy.  
Advocacy contract is subject to regular monitoring, minimum of twice yearly. Monitoring Data is received from the service provider on a monthly basis and these returns are monitored monthly.

***Q2. Names of all organisations you are in contract with for independent advocacy?***

A2a. For Adults with a Learning Disability the Trust have contracted services with the following:

- Bryson Care
- Cause NI Limited
- Mind Wise New Vision
- Alzheimer's Society
- The Association for Real Change
- Carers Forum on Learning Disability

A2b. For adults with Mental Health Conditions the Trust have contracted services with Mindwise Advocacy and Cause Services.

A2c. For adults with Dementia/Alzheimer's the Trust have a contracted service with the Alzheimer's Society.

**Q3. Total payments to each organisation above for each year since 2020 - 2025?**

A3a. Please see Table 1 for the total payments to each organisation for Adults with a Learning Disability, Mental Health Condition or Dementia/Alzheimer's.

Please note, the Trust may also spot purchase Advocacy Services outside of the contract if required.

Table 1

<b>Advocacy</b>	<b>2020/2021</b>	<b>2021/2022</b>	<b>2022/2023</b>	<b>2023/2024</b>	<b>2024/2025</b>
Bryson Care	£30,600	£30,600	£31,805.64	£34,408.64	£34,768.38
Cause NI Limited	£41,954	£41,954	£43,606.99	£45,804.78	£47,669.03
Mind Wise New Vision	£54,118	£54,118	£56,250.25	£59,085.26	£61,490.03
Alzheimer's Society	£34,933	334,933	£36,309.36	£38,139.35	£39,691.62
The Association for Real Change	£23,460	£23,460	£24,384.32	£25,613.29	£26,655.75
Carers Forum on Learning Disability	£37,500	£17,500	£18,189.50	Nil	Nil

**Q4. Does the Health Trust employees have to get consent from family of the service user before appointing an independent advocate?**

A4a. In regards to Adults with a Learning Disability, all service users are entitled to avail of an independent advocate, therefore consent from family members is not sought. Trust staff may make referrals for service users who lack capacity to engage advocacy services themselves. Family members may be advised of the referral.

A4b. In regards to Adults with a mental health condition, no the carers do not need to seek consent from the family to seek support from Cause Services. Mindwise Advocacy service does not require consent from family to access this service, however if there was an issue of capacity this could be considered.

A4c. In regards to Adults with Dementia, no consent is not necessary unless the person living with Dementia is assessed as not having the capacity to consent for themselves. On such occasions the Mental Capacity legislation will have documented a nominated person. Where Safeguarding concerns are raised an Advocate can be appointed as part of a Best Interest approach.

**Q5. *What legal status does an independent advocate have with they are appointed and paid by a Health Trust?***

A5a. In regards to Adults with a Learning Disability, the independent advocate have no legal powers.

A5b. In regards to Adults with a mental health condition the services are primarily commissioned to support the carer and service user but the independent advocate have no legal powers.

A5c. In regards to Adults with Dementia the independent advocate have no legal powers.  
The role is to support and empower the person living with Dementia to make an informed decision/choice and articulate on their behalf, if the individual is unable to do so for themselves or support the person to speak independently.