

14 October 2025

Our Ref: FOI 1386

Dear

**Freedom of Information Act 2000
Information in Relation to Trust Cases in the Family Court**

I am writing to confirm that the South Eastern Health & Social Care Trust (the Trust) has now completed its search for information relating to the above, which you requested on 2 September 2025. Please accept my apologies for the delay in responding to your request. Thank you for your understanding and forbearance.

A response to the questions you have raised has been provided by the Children's Services 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) 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

**Olivia Robinson
Information Governance Officer**

Q1. In the calendar years of 2022, 2023 and 2024, how much was spent on solicitors and lawyers representing the trust in the Family Courts?

A1. The information requested is not held on a central information system. To obtain this information would require a manual review of records.

This would exceed the 'Appropriate Limit' as defined by the Freedom of Information Act 2000. The Trust therefore exempts the release of this information under Section 12(1).

12.(1) Section 1(1) does not oblige a public authority to comply with a request for information if the authority estimates that the cost of complying with the request would exceed the appropriate limit.

In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, this statement acts as a Refusal Notice in respect of the information requested in question 1.

Q2. How many cases did the trust go to Family Court over in the same years?

A2. Please see Table 1 below for the number of C1 applications in which the Trust was involved in proceedings before the Family Court during the calendar years 2022, 2023, and 2024.

Table 1

Year	Number of C1 Applications
2022	139
2023	130
2024	146