



12 September 2025

Our Ref: FOI 1357

Dear

**Freedom of Information Act 2000
Information in relation to Trust Spend on Locum Doctors**

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 15 August 2025.

A response to questions 1 to 4b has been provided by the Finance & Estates Directorate and is attached in Appendix A.

In relation to question 4c ***'Top five agencies/suppliers used off-contract and the spend with each'*** I would like to advise you that the Trust has decided not to release the information that is held for the following reasons:

The information requested in question 4c, 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 letter acts as a Refusal Notice in respect of question 4c.

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

Rebecca Manning
Information Governance Officer

I am requesting the following information for your Trust for the periods April 2024–March 2025 (or the most recent 12 months available):

Q1. Total spend on locum doctors (medical locums) per financial year.

A1. The Trust uses internal and external locums, please see Table 1 for the total spend by internal and external.

Table 1

Year	Total Spend	
	External Locums	Internal Locums
2024/2025	£17,077,769	£7,367,671

Q2. Spend on off-contract / non-framework locum doctors (i.e., spend with suppliers or individuals outside any national or regional framework agreement) per financial year.

A2. Please see Table 2 for the off contract spend with external locums.

Table 2

Year	Total Spend
2024/2025	£1,722,016

Q3. For the most recent financial year only, please provide a breakdown of off-contract spend by:

- **Month**
- **Specialty/service (e.g., Emergency Medicine, General Medicine, Surgery, etc.)**

A3. Please see Table 3 for the off contract spend with external locums broken down by month and speciality for the most recent financial year 25/26.

Table 3

Speciality	April 2025	May 2025	June 2025	July 2025
Accident and Emergency	£16,024	£16,499	£20,444	£20,540
General Medicine	Nil	Nil	Nil	£1,148
Mental Health	£21,600	£21,600	£30,480	£35,160
Obstetrics & Gynaecology	£25,502	£28,469	£33,620	£35,136
Oral Surgery	Nil	Nil	£29,559	£27,110

Trauma and Orthopaedics	£11,934	£1,080	Nil	Nil
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Q4. For the most recent financial year only:

a. Number of locum doctor shifts supplied off-contract.

b. Highest hourly rate paid off-contract and the specialty for that shift.

A4a. The Trust does not hold information in relation to the number of shifts supplied, however the Trust does hold the number of hours used. The Trust has used 3,789 hours of off contracted external medical agency.

A4b. The highest hourly rate paid was £159 within the Oral Surgery speciality.