

Information Governance

8 May 2017

Our Ref: RFI 20101

Dear

**Freedom of Information Act 2000
Information on Policies & Procedures in Relation to the Fostering Team,
Lisburn**

I am writing to confirm that the South Eastern Health & Social Care Trust (the Trust) has now completed its search for the information relating to the above which you requested on 6 April 2017.

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

Under the terms of the legislation, if you are unhappy with this response you have the right to seek a review within the Trust in the first instance. If you wish to do so, please write to me at the address below.

If after such a review you are still unhappy with the response, you have the right to appeal to the Information Commissioner who will undertake an independent review. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at The Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, SK9 5AF.

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

**L McAree (Miss)
Head of Information Governance &
Directorate Support**

Enc

- Q1. *a copy of the business continuity plan for the Fostering Team in Lisburn that is used in the event of an emergency or severe staff shortage;*
- A1. Please see attached the Cared for Children, Directorate Incident Response Plan, in particular the areas highlighted in yellow regarding the Contingency Actions for the Critical Risk Factors regarding staffing.
- Q2. *a copy of the policies/procedures for the Fostering Team in Lisburn that apply when assessing staff cover in the Fostering Team (ie minimum number of staff required to be present in a team). Highlighted reference to specific relevant paragraphs would also be helpful;*
- A2. Please see attached the annual leave policy. I refer to section 4.0 which highlighted that period of notice will be determined locally to enable rota arrangements. Locally the line management of fostering services have determined the need for 2 members of staff to be available to meet the needs of the service. It is also local practice that staff teams agree leave arrangements across the team, ensuring 2 members of staff are available. In circumstances where agreement is not reached this will be discussed with line management, who will approve leave request on a fair and equitable basis, as expected by annual leave policy.
- Q3. *a copy of the policies and procedures for the Fostering Team in Lisburn in relation to approval of annual leave and response times from management when assessing requests for leave from staff. Highlighted reference to specific relevant paragraphs would also be helpful;*
- A3. Please see response provided in A2 above.
- Q4. *copies of all of the above for the SE Trust if a local policy/procedure does not exist for the Fostering Team in Lisburn; and*
- A4. Please see attached documentation as referenced in A1 and A2 above.
- Q5. *copies of all correspondence (if it exists) from SE Trust management instructing local management in the Lisburn Fostering Team to adopt different local policies/procedures in relation to approval of leave or staff cover as requested in my points 1,2 and 3 above.*

The fostering service applies the attached policy regarding annual leave requests and local arrangement regarding staff cover is agreed across the service. Local arrangement for having 2 staff within the teams is to promote adherence with the attached policy on the Fostering Service Management of Unallocated Cases during planned and unplanned leave (copy attached). There is no specific instruction from management to apply a different local policy/procedure in this regard and this agreement is compliant with the Trust policy re annual leave as discussed in A2 above.