

Information Governance

6 January 2020

Our Ref: RFI 32451

Dear

**Freedom of Information Act 2000
Information in Relation to the Trust's Care Pathway for Children with
Selective Mutism**

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 4 December 2019.

A response to each of the questions raised has been provided by the Children's Services and Social Work 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

Rebecca Kelly
Information Governance Assistant

Q1. *Could someone provide me with a copy of the trusts care pathway in relation to children with selective mutism?*

A1. Children may present with selective mutism when they are fully capable of using speech and understanding language, but are unable to speak in certain situations. A child with selective mutism may speak freely at home, but may be completely silent at school. In the Trust a pathway has been developed for children with selective mutism, and these children are known as reluctant speakers.

Services for children who are reluctant speakers are provided by the Regional Integrated Support for Education in Northern Ireland (RISE NI) team, who work with children from nursery until P4.

Initially, training is provided to school and nursery staff through the 'working with reluctant speakers' pathway. A resource pack is also provided for teachers and strategies are implemented for one term.

If difficulties persist, the school can request a consultation with the RISE NI team. This may result in a referral to the RISE NI team if indicated. Assessment and intervention will also be offered if indicated.

If the difficulties persist following intervention, or if a child is older than P4, then an assessment will be offered by the step 3 Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) team. Treatment will be provided by the step 3 CAMHS team if indicated.

Within the Children's Speech and Language Therapy (SLT) department, a referral may be accepted for a child presenting as a reluctant speaker, if there are other identified concerns regarding the child's speech and language development.

However, if there are no concerns relating to the child's speech and language development the referral will not be accepted for SLT assessment, but will be signposted to the RISE NI team or Child Health Single Point of Entry Triaging panel, who follow the pathway detailed above.