

01 August 2022

Our Ref: RFI 45250

Dear

**Freedom of Information Act 2000
Requesting information on third party top up fees in Trust care homes**

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 27 June 2022.- Please accept my apologies for the delay in responding to your request. Thank you for your patience and forbearance in this respect.

A response to Questions 1 – 5 and 7 – 8 has been provided by the Finance & Estates Directorate and is attached in Appendix A.

In respect of Q6, please note the following:

Q6 How much money did the South Eastern Trust receive after invoicing persons for a third party top up fee in the calendar years 2018-2021?

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 letter acts as a Refusal Notice in respect of Q6.

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

Louise McNamara
Information Governance Officer

Q1 How many residential and nursing care homes in the South Eastern Trust area charge a third party top fee?

A1 The Trust are paying top-up fees to 61 Residential/Nursing Homes and subsequently invoicing the Third Party. However other Nursing/Residential homes within the area could be privately charging top-up directly to residents which the Trust is unaware of.

Q2 Why do they charge a third party top up fee?

A2 All homes can determine their own specific fees and the Trust would not be aware of the reasons why they charge additional fees.

Q3 What extra services are provided in a care home that charges third party top up fee?

A3 A third party contribution can be for a range of additional services agreed between the respective parties or where the homes fee rate is above the regional rate that the Trust is directed to pay by the Department of Health.

Q4 How many residents are currently in care homes that charge a third party top up fee and it is paid for by the South Eastern Trust?

A4 The Trust currently pays top up fees for 27 residents.

Q5 How much money did the South Eastern Trust invoice persons for a third party top up fee in the calendar years 2018-2021?

A5 Please refer to Table 1.

Table 1

Year	Amount
2018	£ 1,169,827.47
2019	£1,207,832.55
2020	£1,189,485.74
2021	£1,271,708.72

Q7 Are persons who pay a third party top up fee entitled to refunds when the service is not provided to an acceptable standard? If not, why not?

A7 This would depend on the circumstances and each individual case.

Q8 *Provide a copy of the South Eastern Trust Third Party Top Up Fee policy*

A8 The Trust does not have a Third Party Top Up Fee Policy.