



21 October 2024

Our Ref: FOI/179

Dear

**Freedom of Information Act 2000
Information in Relation to Foster Carers Pay**

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 09 October 2024.

A response to the question raised has been provided by the Children's Services & 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 Manning
Information Governance Officer

I am conducting a research project on the changes in foster carer numbers and pay over the past 10 years. Please could you exclude kinship carers, children on staying put (or when I am ready), or supported accommodation. Under the Freedom of Information Act please could you provide me with the following information from 31/03/2014 to 31/03/2024?

- ***Year ending 31/3/14***
- ***Y/E 31/3/15***
- ***Y/E 31/3/16***
- ***Y/E 31/3/17***
- ***Y/E 31/3/18***
- ***Y/E 31/3/19***
- ***Y/E 31/3/20***
- ***Y/E 31/3/21***
- ***Y/E 31/3/22***
- ***Y/E 31/3/23***
- ***Y/E 31/3/24***

Q1. *Number of foster carers registered with your LA.*

A1. Please be advised the Trust is unable to provide the requested figures from 2014, the Trust's electronic system only dates back to 2020, therefore any data prior to this 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 regards to the information, prior to 2020, requested in questions 1, 2 & 3.

Please see Table 1 for the number of approved fostering households from March 2020 to March 2024.

Table 1

Year as at 31st March	No. of Approved Fostering Households
2020	327
2021	334
2022	308
2023	292
2024	271

Q2. Foster carers recruited.

A2. Please see Table 2 for the number of newly approved recruited fostering households from March 2020 to March 2024.

Table 2

Year as at 31 st March	No. of Recruited Fostering Households
2020	40
2021	55
2022	38
2023	41
2024	48

Q3. Foster carers deregistered.

A3. Please see Table 3 for the number of foster carers deregistered from March 2020 to March 2024.

Table 3

Year as at 31 st March	No. of De-Registered Fostering Households
2020	46
2021	48
2022	64
2023	57
2024	69

Q4. Average total weekly pay per child to foster carers whilst actively fostering including all fees and allowances.

A4. The Trust is unable to provide the average total weekly pay per child to foster carers due to the different variations in fee payments i.e. full fee, half fee, third of a fee, specialist fee etc. The amount of Finance for each child also differs dependant on the age of the child. Therefore it is not possible to calculate an average cost.