

10 March 2022

Allegations and Complaints made in respect of Foster Carers in Belfast Trust

This request relates to the complaints and allegations concerning foster carers under the operation of the Regional Policy and Procedure for Managing Allegations and Complaints made in respect of Foster Carers in Northern Ireland (April 2015)

The Regional Policy and Procedure for Managing Allegations and Complaints (April 2015) states, “A record of all allegations and complaints must be kept by the Trust and reported annually via the Delegated Statutory Functions (DSF) reporting mechanism.”

Also, the UK Minimum Standards for Foster Care (1999) state “Management Systems are in place to collate and evaluate information on the circumstances, number, and outcome of all allegations of neglect or abuse of a child in foster care.”

In addition, Department of Health Circular (OSS) 4/2015: Statutory functions/professional oversight states, “Ensuring the appropriate collection, maintenance and analysis of data to monitor service provision, including the discharge of DSF, and sharing such information with the HSCB;”

Please provide a copy of the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust's annual report concerning foster carers of all allegations and complaints under the Regional Policy and Procedure for Managing Allegations and Complaints (April 2015) for each of the last five years (2020-21, 2019-20, 2018-19, 2017-18, 2016-17)

Response:

Year	Allegations and Complaints
2016/17	7
2017/18	7
2018/19	<5
2019/20	<5
2020/21	<5

Where the numbers are low we have indicated <5, as releasing the exact number has the potential to lead to the disclosure of personally identifiable information of an individual(s). Therefore, Belfast Trust has applied Section 40 (2) of the Freedom of Information Act to exempt any numbers less than 5.

In addition, we are not able to provide further information in relation to these allegations and complaints as this is personal information and exempt from disclosure under Section 40 (2) of the Freedom of Information Act.