

**6 December 2024**

## Agency Nursing Shifts

- 1. Please confirm the number of shifts sent to agencies for fulfilment per month for Band 5 and Band 6 Nurses, broken down by specialty (e.g., A&E, ITU) from June 2024 to October 2024.**

Belfast Trust are unable to provide the information in the format requested as it would take more than 18 hours to retrieve the information per specialty, However we can confirm the total number of shifts sent out to agencies per month for all Band 5 and Band 6 Nursing Registrants (inclusive of A&E, ICU & all other specialties) is:

Month	Total Band 5/6 Shift Requests
June	6530
July	6044
August	6028
September	6157
October	6162

- 2. Please confirm the number of shifts that were filled by agencies each month from June 2024 to October 2024.**

Belfast Trust can confirm the total number of shifts filled by agencies per month for all Band 5 and Band 6 Nursing Registrants (inclusive of A&E, ICU & all other specialties) is:

Month	Total Band 5/6 Shift Fill
June	5547
July	5438
August	5444
September	5441
October	5596

- 3. Please confirm any specific days, weeks, or months during which agency usage is consistently highest.**

There are no specific days, weeks or months in which usage is consistently high. Agency use fluctuates based on the needs of service, vacancy position, staff absence, patient acuity and the availability of internal bank resource.

**6 December 2024**

- 4. Please provide the agency spend per month by nursing band (e.g., Band 5, Band 6) for agency nurses, from June 2024 to October 2024.**

Please see the attached document

- 5. Please provide a breakdown of the filled Nursing shifts by agency on a monthly basis over the period from June 2024 to October 2024.**

To provide the breakdown of agency shifts per month would be commercially sensitive.

Section 43(2) states that information is exempt if its disclosure would, or would be likely to, prejudice the commercial interests of any person (including the public authority holding it).

In accordance with the FOI Act 2000 we cannot fulfill this part of your request under Section 43 Commercial Interest. The arguments to maintain this exemption outweigh the arguments for disclosure. Its disclosure would be prejudicial to the commercial interest of the agency providers.

- 6. Please confirm the number of Nursing hours filled by off-framework agencies, broken down by month, between June 2024 and October 2024.**

To provide the nursing hours filled by off-framework agencies, broken down by month would be commercially sensitive.

Section 43(2) states that information is exempt if its disclosure would, or would be likely to, prejudice the commercial interests of any person (including the public authority holding it).

In accordance with the FOI Act 2000 we cannot fulfill this part of your request under Section 43 Commercial Interest. The arguments to maintain this exemption outweigh the arguments for disclosure. Its disclosure would be prejudicial to the commercial interest of the agency providers.

- 7. Please provide details of the Trust's spend per month for each nursing agency supplier during the period of June 2024 to October 2024.**

Please see the attached document

- 8. Please confirm if a Preferred Supplier List (PSL) or tiered system is in place for Nursing agency engagement.**

Belfast Trust can confirm a nursing framework with a two tier system, is in place for Nurse Agency engagement.

**6 December 2024**

**9. How many different agencies does the Trust engage with monthly to fill nursing shifts, and is there a limit on the number of agencies used?**

Please see the attached document

**10. Does the Trust have a projected agency usage plan for the coming year, and are there specific goals for reducing agency dependency?**

Belfast Trust do not have a projected agency usage plan for the coming year. We are focused on increasing our workforce capacity and reducing the spend on temporary staffing.

While we are stabilising and strengthening our staffing levels through recruitment, education and retention activities, we have to ensure the safety of our patients and therefore rely on the support from a temporary workforce.

The use of temporary workforce is strictly controlled and every effort is made to backfill vacancies with our substantive staff working overtime and our internal Nursing & Midwifery Bank.

When all other avenues of temporary workforce have been exhausted, Nursing & Midwifery recruitment agencies are utilised to maintain patient safety and the delivery of high quality person centred care.

**11. If you answered yes to the above question, what are they?**

Not applicable

**12. Is there a long-term strategy in place to reduce agency nursing costs or transition to alternative staffing models?**

Belfast Trust can confirm they are involved in collective works streams to reduce agency nursing costs, however, appreciate that the current staffing arrangements across our services remains challenging and we continue to undertake ongoing recruitment exercises, including with the assistance of the wider health and social care system and the Department of Health, to fill vacant positions within nursing and nursing support.

**13. If you answered yes to the above question, what are they?**

Belfast Trust can confirm a regional agency reduction implementation and planning project is ongoing, including but not limited to the following work streams associated with reducing agency nursing costs:

- Agency Reduction Implementation Group
- Reform of Nurse & Midwifery Bank
- Student Streamlining Recruitment
- Targeted International Nurse Recruitment