

23 January 2025

Foster Carer Involvement and Foster Care Forum

I am writing to make a request for all the following information, which I am entitled to under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. The request concerns foster care services in the Trust.

For foster care policies, please interpret this as any policy, protocol, or standard operating procedure, which directly impacts the service foster carers, provide, receive or use.

For foster carer please interpret this as including kinship and non-kinship carer.

For foster carer forum please interpret this as any standing forum or committee which discusses matters related to fostering service provision, which has foster carers as members.

1a. Does the Trust have a foster carer forum, which meets regularly?

Belfast Health and Social Care Trust (Belfast Trust) does not have a Foster Carer Forum or committee, as described above.

1b. Was this foster carer forum operational in 2023?

There was no Foster Carer Forum operational in 2023.

1c. Was this foster carer forum operational in 2024?

There was no Foster Carer Forum operational in 2024.

2. Please provide a copy of the Terms of Reference for any operational foster carer forum.

There are no Terms of Reference for a Foster Carer Forum, as a forum does not currently exist.

3. Please provide copies of the minutes or meeting notes of the foster carer forum for the years 2023 and 2024.

There are no minutes or meeting notes of a Foster Carer Forum, as a forum does not currently exist.

4. Please provide the number of foster carers involved in the foster carer forum. (Please provide a breakdown by kinship / non-kinship carers).

Belfast Trust does not have a Foster Carer Forum or committee and therefore cannot provide this information.

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5a. Please provide a list of foster care policies developed or reviewed in 2023.

There were two foster care policies in development stages in this time

- Management of Allegations Pathway
- Kinship Placement Risk Assessment

5b. Please indicate if the foster carer forum was involved in the co-production of these policies.

The above noted were regionally developed policies that did not pertain to Belfast Trust alone.

There was no foster carer involvement in the Kinship Placement Risk Assessment, as this is a document for internal use; however, the Management of Allegations Pathway included foster carer representation from another HSC Trust.

6a. Please provide a list of foster care policies developed or reviewed in 2024.

There were two foster care policies in development stages in this time

- Management of Allegations Pathway
- Kinship Placement Risk Assessment

6b. Please indicate if the foster carer forum was involved in the co-production of these policies.

The above were regionally developed policies that did not pertain to Belfast Trust alone.

There was no foster carer involvement in the Kinship Placement Risk Assessment, as this is a document for internal use; however, the Management of Allegations Pathway included foster carer representation from another HSC Trust.

7a. Please provide a list of foster care policies currently being developed, reviewed or updated by the Trust.

There are no relevant policies currently under development in Belfast Trust.

7b. Please indicate if the foster carer forum was involved in the co-production of these policies.

Belfast Trust does not currently have a Foster Carer Forum.

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7c. Please include the expected date of completion of the policy development or update.

There are no relevant policies currently under development in Belfast Trust.

8a. Has the Trust undertaken any reorganisation, restructuring or reconfiguration of its fostering services in 2023 or 2024?

Belfast Trust has not undertaken any reorganisation, restructuring or reconfiguration of its fostering services in 2023 or 2024

8b. Where foster carers consulted concerning these changes?

Belfast Trust has not undertaken any reorganisation, restructuring or reconfiguration of its fostering services in 2023 or 2024

8c. Please provide a copy of the consultation report.

Belfast Trust has not undertaken any reorganisation, restructuring or reconfiguration of its fostering services in 2023 or 2024

9a. Please provide a list of regional foster care policies (including strategies, frameworks, schemes, standards, and regulations) on which the foster carer forum has been consulted in the years 2023 and 2024.

Belfast Trust cannot provide information on regionally led foster care policies (including strategies, frameworks, schemes, standards, and regulations) over and above those listed in 5a and 6a.

9b. Please provide copies of any response or report submitted by the Foster Carer Forum or Trust foster carers on each of the regional policies.

Belfast Trust does not currently have a Foster Carer Forum to generate responses or reports on regional policies.