

**22 July 2025**

## **Cardiac Surgery Timeline of Events**

**Please provide the following information. At a recent Belfast Trust public meeting I submitted the following question.**

**The response is as follows.**

**"Which Executive Team Directors oversee the Cardiac Unit and when where they first alerted to unrest within that unit? Also what steps did those Directors take to address the serious issues within that team before it escalated?"**

**"The Interim Director of ACCTS and Surgery is the lead Director for Cardiac Surgery services at the Trust, and is supported in particular by the Interim Chief Executive, the Medical Director, Interim Director of Nursing and User Experience, and the Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development. In 2020, the Belfast Trust requested an external review by the Royal College of Surgeons (RCS). The RCS review confirmed that the cardiac surgery service was safe, but made recommendations around operational restructuring, including separation of the cardiac and thoracic surgery consultant teams, as well as changes to management and clinical cultures and relationships."**

**I don't believe answer provide addresses the question "what steps did those Directors take to address the serious issues within that team before it escalated"**

**Please provide a timeline of any complaints made and a timeline of the actions taken by directors involved or the Executive team, including the Chairman?**

We are unable to provide the information which you have requested as this is withheld under Section 36 (Prejudice to effective conduct of public affairs) of the Freedom of Information Act (2000). The Trust feels that if we were to release this report, this would likely prejudice the effective conduct of the Trust's Investigation into the Cardiac Surgery Unit.

In order to uphold this exemption, a qualified person must review the arguments for and against disclosure. In this case, the Chief Executive of the Belfast Trust has confirmed that the requested information should be withheld under Section 36 as the need to protect the integrity of the ongoing investigation is recognised.