

14 April 2026

FOI/36335 - Paediatric Discharge and Referral Errors 2025

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, I am requesting information regarding patient safety and referral accuracy, specifically for the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children (RBHSC) for the calendar year 2025.

Please provide the following:

- 1. Misdirected Referrals: The total number of incidents in 2025 where a patient at the RBHSC was incorrectly referred to an adult facility, an inappropriate clinical service, or an incorrect destination.**

Belfast Health and Social Care Trust undertook a search of its incident reporting system for the calendar year 2025. Four incidents were identified that met the criteria of patients being incorrectly referred to an inappropriate clinical service or destination at the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children (RBHSC).

- 2. Documentation: Copies of any "Lessons Learned" summaries, internal memos, or correspondence (anonymised) produced in 2025 regarding systemic referral errors at the RBHSC. Please include if available a copy of the policy for referring sick children to other services.**

Belfast Trust does not hold any formal lessons learned summaries, internal memos or systemic review documentation relating specifically to the four incidents identified at Question 1. Complaints data was reviewed separately and did not identify complaints evidencing misdirected referrals or systemic referral errors in 2025. Incidents and complaints are managed as separate processes, and not all incidents result in formal learning documentation.

A wider search of individual staff correspondence relating to these four incidents would involve more than 18-hours work. Belfast Trust considers that the cost of retrieving the information would be above the 'Appropriate Limit', as defined by the Freedom of Information Act under Section 12. Section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act makes provision for public authorities to refuse requests for information where the cost of dealing with them would exceed the appropriate limit. The limit has been specified as £450 for public authorities such as Belfast Trust. This represents the cost of one or more persons spending 18 hours in determining whether we hold the information, locating, retrieving and extracting this information.

There is no Trust policy for referring children to other services.

14 April 2026

- 3. Financial Penalties: Please state if any internal or external financial penalties/fines were issued specifically against RBHSC departments in 2025 regarding these discharge or referral errors; if so, please provide the total amount and number of fines/penalties.**

There have been no internal or external financial penalties / fines issued specifically against RBHSC departments in 2025 regarding these discharge or referral errors.

FOI/36336 - RBHSC Gastrostomy (PEG) Care and Referral Data 2025

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, I request the following specific information regarding the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children (RBHSC) for the calendar year 2025:

- 1. Referral Policy & Procedure: A copy of the formal policy and the step-by-step procedure for referring or transferring a PEG-fed (gastrostomy-dependent) child from the RBHSC to any other hospital or healthcare facility within Northern Ireland.**

Belfast Trust does not hold a specific Trust-wide policy that relates solely to the referral or transfer of PEG-fed (gastrostomy-dependent) children from the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children (RBHSC) to another hospital or healthcare facility.

When a child is transferred from the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children (RBHSC) to another Health and Social Care (HSC) facility within Northern Ireland, all clinical documentation is completed and shared electronically through the encompass system.

If the receiving hospital does not use encompass (EPIC), the relevant documentation is printed from encompass and accompanies the child. In all cases, a verbal handover is also provided to ensure continuity of care during transfer.

- 2. Staffing Levels: The total number of Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) Gastrostomy/Enteral Nutrition Nurse Specialists currently employed and based specifically at the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children.**

There are 2.0 WTE Gastrostomy Nurses.
There are no Enteral Nutrition Nurse Specialists within RBHSC.

14 April 2026

- 3. Patient Census: The total number of children currently under the active care of the RBHSC (including those managed via the Paediatric Gastroenterology Service) who are PEG-fed or gastrostomy-tube dependent.**

There are 471 children across Northern Ireland with a gastrostomy / jejunal-feeding device.

This number includes those children being cared for by the Gastroenterology service.

- 4. Referral Errors: The total number of recorded clinical incidents or administrative "near misses" in 2025 where a PEG-fed child was incorrectly referred or transferred to a facility that was unable to provide the required level of gastrostomy care/support.**

On review of Belfast Trust's incident reporting system there were no incidents recorded which meet this search criteria.