

28 April 2026

Consultant SPAs and External Duties

Please provide the following information regarding *substantive consultant medical and dental staff* for your most recently completed job planning round (and in section 5, the past 5 years).

Workforce Overview

1. The number of substantive consultants employed (headcount and WTE).

Year	Headcount	WTE
2026	893	843.32
2025	869	829.55
2024	855	819.72
2023	815	779.37
2022	767	737.09

Please note that these figures are as at 31st March each year.

2. Your organisation's current standard (or reference) job plan for a full-time consultant, including the normal DCC/SPA split. (Please provide the document or template if available).

10PA Contract 8.5 DCC and 1.5 SPA

3. Number of consultant posts with SPA time and total SPAs allocated.

All consultant posts within Belfast Health and Social Care Trust have a minim of 1.5 SPA.

4. Typical SPA allocation in a 10-PA contract.

1.5PAs

5. How many consultant posts have no SPA time allocated?

0

6. Count of consultants according to the number of SPAs stated in their job plan:

<1.0 SPA

1.0–1.4 SPA

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1.5–1.9 SPA

2.0–2.4 SPA

≥2.5 SPA

Job planning is a manual process and to review and collate would take over the 18 hours to complete.

- 7. Since 1 April 2020, have there been any changes to SPA allocation policy or the standard consultant DCC/SPA split? Yes/No. If yes, please provide any available documentation and briefly outline these changes.**

No

- 8. Does your organisation have a policy or standard approach for recognising external professional duties including but not limited to the following; Roles for Royal Colleges / Faculties, Specialist societies or associations, National clinical networks, guideline groups or NHS national bodies, or Regulatory roles (e.g., GMC, NICE)**

Please answer: Yes/No. If yes, provide the policy or a summary.

Yes - External duties will be considered within the job plan, either within PAs or through discretionary leave. Accepting external duties must be with the agreement of the service group. The onus will be on the consultant to demonstrate how the impact of an external duty, on direct clinical care, can be minimised.

For consultants who currently hold such external or national duties, please provide the number who:

9. Have allocated PA(s)

Job planning is a manual process and to review and collate would take over the 18 hours to complete. Under Section 12 of the Freedom of Information 2000, the limit has been specified as £450 and represents the estimated cost of one or more persons spending 18 hours in determining whether we hold the information, locating, retrieving and extracting this information.

10. Are permitted to use existing SPA allocation

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11. Undertake these duties in their own time.

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Protection of SPA time

12. Does the organisation monitor whether planned SPA time is delivered? Yes/No. If yes, please provide a short description of the method.

No

13. Does the organisation have a policy or guidance on the protection of SPA time (including but not limited to; discouraging routine cancellation or repurposing SPA for service pressures)? Yes/No. If yes, please provide the document.

No

14. Summary of activities SPA time was used for (e.g. including but not limited to; education, CPD, audit, research, governance, external duties, etc).

SPA Time Over the Past Five Years

For each of the past five complete job-planning years, please provide an annual summary showing:

15. Number of consultants with SPA time

Number of substantive consultants employed with SPA as at 31st March each year.

Year	Headcount
2026	893
2025	869
2024	855
2023	815
2022	767

16. Total or average SPA time allocated (total SPA PAs or average per consultant).

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17. Total or estimated SPA time used in that year.

Job planning is a manual process and to review and collate would take over the 18 hours to complete.

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