Belfast Health and Social Care Trust
caring supporting improving together

FOI/38064

2 November 2026

Children in Foster Care, Kinship Care, or an Equivalent Connected Persons or Family and Friends Arrangement

I am submitting this request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Belfast City Council previously confirmed, in response to an earlier enquiry on 3 June 2026, that children's social care and foster care functions in the Belfast area sit with the Trust rather than the Council, and directed me to you. A related informal enquiry was sent to this address at the time but did not receive a response, and no formal request has been submitted since - I am now taking this forward directly.

For the period 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2025:

1. **How many children were assessed, placed or approved to live in foster care, kinship care, or an equivalent connected-persons or family and friends arrangement, where a proposed carer, or another adult in the household:**

   None.

a) was subject to notification requirements under the Sexual Offences Act 2003; and/or

   None.

b) had a conviction for a sexual offence.

   None.

2. **How many of these arrangements were approved?**

   None.

3. **Does the Trust maintain a central record of such cases?**

   Belfast Trust Fostering service keeps a central database, no such cases were identified during the specified timeframe.

4. **Please provide any policy, procedure or guidance relating to such placements, including whether the Trust operates a prohibition, a presumption against, or a case-by-case assessment process**.

Belfast Trust operates a case-by-case assessment process. Decisions are informed by the Regional Kinship Placement Risk Assessment (KPRA), which is used to assess the circumstances and risks associated with individual kinship placements. Please refer to the attached document:

38064 Children in Foster Care, Kinship Care, or an Equivalent Connected Persons or Family and Friends Arrangement_Attachment 1.

5. **Before a Child Arrangements Order, or the equivalent Northern Ireland private law order naming a person with whom a child is to live, is granted, what safeguard or process, if any, ensures that the Court and/or the Trust are made aware if that person is subject to notification requirements under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 or has a conviction for a sexual offence?**

   Please identify the specific policy or procedure document that governs this, rather than a general reference to a website.

   Belfast Trust does not hold a specific policy or procedure document governing this matter. Therefore, under Section 1(1)(a) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the information requested is not held.

   Information relating to the relevant statutory framework is publicly available and exempt under Section 21 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (Information accessible by other means) via the Department of Health website:

   Draft Northern Ireland Fostering Services Minimum Standards | Department of Health

   Publications | Department of Health

6. **Has the Trust's approach to any of the above changed at any point since January 2023?**

   No.

   If any part of this request would exceed the appropriate cost limit under section 12 of the Act, I ask that you provide the information that can be supplied within the statutory limit, and advise what could be provided if the scope of the request were refined.

   I raise this in the context of the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Ruby (Leeds Safeguarding Children Partnership, January 2023), which found that a child was placed in the primary care of a registered sex offender via a private law order naming him as the person the child was to live with, with no such check having taken place. My request seeks to establish whether the same gap could exist here, and whether it has been addressed since that review.