

28 June 2023

Motor Neurone Disease

I am writing to you under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to request the following information. Please may you provide me with:

- 1. Does the local authority/health and social care trust hold and maintain a register of carers in its area?**

Belfast Health and Social Care Trust has a Carer Information List, which provides regular communication about carer services and supports. This is a voluntary register and carers are invited to join the Carer Information List when they engage with the Trust to discuss their carer needs, via a carer assessment. Carers may also self-refer if they have a caring role.

- 2. If yes to 1, how many carers have been identified in the local authority area at the time of receipt of this FOI?**

3538 carers

- 3. Does the local authority/health and social care trust commission an external organisation(s) to be responsible for and conduct Carers' Assessments on its behalf?**

Adult Carer Assessments are undertaken by Belfast Trust.

Young Carer Assessments are undertaken by an external organisation, Action for Children, who is commissioned to undertake the service by the Strategic Performance and Planning Group, Department of Health.

- 4. Does the local authority/health and social care trust – or the commissioned organisation responsible for Carers' Assessments – have a formal fast-track process in place for the delivery of Carers' Assessments for carers of people with severe, progressive conditions?**

There is not a fast track process. However, a carers' assessment is offered where carers are identified at initial assessment and throughout contact with a service user, (i.e. where the carers' role may change). This would be prioritised by the keyworker, where the patient's condition has deteriorated.

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Within Children's Services, Carers' Assessments are carried out within the UNOCINI (Understanding the Needs of Children in Northern Ireland) assessment framework. Children's Community Services do not operate a "formal fast track process" to undertake carers' assessments, however, where a referral is identified as urgent; we will endeavour to prioritise the case for allocation and assessment.

5. Following initial Carers' Assessments, does the local authority/health and social care trust – or the commissioned organisation responsible for Carers' Assessments – conduct routine reassessments for carers of people with severe, progressive conditions?

Carers are offered a yearly re-assessment or at any time where there is a change in circumstances.

Within Children's Services, this is conducted annually.

6. Does the local authority/health and social care trust – or the commissioned organisation responsible for Carers' Assessments – use a standardised form for undertaking Carers' Assessments?

The carers' component of the Northern Ireland Single Assessment Tool (NISAT) is the standardised approach used in Belfast Trust to undertake adult carer assessments.

Within Children's Services, Carers' Assessments are carried out within the UNOCINI (Understanding the Needs of Children in Northern Ireland) assessment framework.

7. Does the local authority/health and social care trust have a Single Point of Access for information and guidance on Carers' Assessments?

The Carer Support Service is a central point of contact in the Trust for information relating to carers and carer assessments. Contact information is shared via the Trust website, service areas and through other outlets.

8. What is the cost of conducting one single Carers' Assessment?

The cost associated with conducting a Carer Assessment will depend on the staff grade undertaking the assessment and the length of time required, which will vary according to each individual case.

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Due to the time required to undertake this work, the Trust is unable to provide a response.

The 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.

9. What is the average (mean) waiting time between request for assessment and completion of assessment for all Carers' Assessments in:

- a. The year April 2018 to March 2019
- b. The year April 2019 to March 2020
- c. The year April 2020 to March 2021
- d. The year April 2021 to March 2022
- e. The year April 2022 to March 2023?

As above, due to the time required to undertake this work, the Trust is unable to provide a response. We estimate the cost of complying with the request would exceed the appropriate limit set out in Section 12(1) of the Freedom of Information Act.

10. Does the local authority allocate a specific budget for Carers' Assessments?

Belfast Trust does not have a specific Carer Assessment budget. The Trust has a Carer Support budget, which provides funding to offer a range of information and support services in line with carers need across the Trust service areas.

11. If yes to 10, what was the local authority's/health and social care trust's annual budget for Carers' Assessments in:

- a. The year April 2018 to March 2019
- b. The year April 2019 to March 2020
- c. The year April 2020 to March 2021
- d. The year April 2021 to March 2022
- e. The year April 2022 to March 2023?

N/A

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12. If yes to 10, what proportion, as a percentage, of the budget allocation for Carers' Assessments was spent in:

- a. The year April 2018 to March 2019**
- b. The year April 2019 to March 2020**
- c. The year April 2020 to March 2021**
- d. The year April 2021 to March 2022**
- e. The year April 2022 to March 2023**

N/A