

21 October 2024

Children and Adults with Disabilities Social Workers

- 1. How many social workers do you have dedicated to children with special needs as of August 31st, 2024? How many social workers have you had dedicated to children with special needs on the same date for the years 2019 - 2023 inclusive?**

Figures in relation to the number of Social Workers in Community Children with Disabilities (CWD) Teams have been centrally collated since 2022 and, therefore, we are not able to provide figures for 2019 – 2021.

On 31 August 2024, the CWD Teams were commissioned for 21 Social Work posts, which includes Social Workers (Band 5/6) and Senior Practitioners (Band 7). There were 4.7 vacancies at that time.

On 31 August 2023, the CWD Teams were commissioned for 21 Social Work posts, which includes Social Workers (Band 5/6) and Senior Practitioners (Band 7). There were 5 vacancies at that time.

On 31 August 2022, the CWD Teams are commissioned for 21 Social Work posts, which includes Social Workers (Band 5/6) and Senior Practitioners (Band 7). There were 2.5 vacancies at that time.

- 2. How many social workers do you have dedicated to adults with special needs as of August 31st, 2024? How many social workers have you had dedicated to adults with special needs on the same date for the years 2019 - 2023 inclusive?**

For the years 2019, 2020 and 2021 the information is not held. The systems were not in place at that time to record the information.

2022	24
2023	26
2024	32

- 3. What is the average caseload for each social worker dedicated to children with special needs as of August 31st, 2024? What is the caseload on the same date for the years 2019 - 2023 inclusive?**

For each Social Worker in the CWD Teams on 31 August 2024, the average caseload was 30 cases. It is possible to determine this given the recent date and the fact that information can be gained from current caseloads.

However, caseloads for Social Workers vary considerably depending on, for example, levels of experience, banding of staff, number of vacancies and

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referrals requiring allocation. We do not centrally collate caseload information in the way requested. To research average caseloads in the preceding years, i.e. from 2019 to 2023, would require a manual search that would take in excess of 18 hours to complete.

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.

4. What is the average caseload for each social worker dedicated to adults with special needs as of August 31st, 2024? What is the caseload on the same date for the years 2019 - 2023 inclusive?

For the years 2019, 2020 and 2021 the information is not held. The systems were not in place at that time to record the information.

2022	29
2023	28
2024	21

5. How many respite days was the trust able to offer during each year 2019 - 2023? Please may I have an annual breakdown?

Children with Disabilities

The number of respite days across Children's Services are not centrally collated and to research this would require a manual search, which would take in excess of 18 hours to complete.

Again, 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.

Adult Services

2019	151,320 hours respite were offered, this information is collated by hours.
2020	80,264 hours respite were offered, this information is collated by hours.
2021	54,173 hours respite were offered, this information is collated by hours.
2022	81,187 hours respite were offered, this information is collated by hours.
2023	115,694 hours respite were offered, this information is collated by hours.
2024	January to June 2024: 63,384 hours respite were offered, this information is collated by hours.

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