

26 March 2025

## Statistics on Children’s Social Workers

I would like to submit the following FOI request. Please don't hesitate to get in touch with me if you need any clarification.

- 1. How many children's social workers were employed by the Trust on each Jan 1st, 2020 - 2025? Please could you provide an annual breakdown?**

Belfast Health and Social Care Trust undertake an annual review of social work staff across service areas as at 31 December each year.

Please see below the breakdown of community-based and hospital-based social work staff working across a range of teams within the Directorate. The information provided is for social work staff at all grades, including frontline managers and senior management teams who have responsibilities for the service areas.

- 2. How many of these workers work within hospitals and how many work from the field? Please could you provide an annual breakdown?**

	31/12/19	31/12/20	31/12/21	31/12/22	31/12/23	31/12/24
<b>Hospital-based:</b>	11	12	11	14	16	17
<b>Community-based:</b>	414	400	424	415	395	410
<b>Total:</b>	468	412	435	429	411	427

Please note: Belfast Trust has been improving the processes involved in collating this data, which has supported the increase of assurance regarding the accuracy of the data over the last three years.

- 3. What was the case load for children's social workers on each Jan 1st, 2020 - 2025? Please could you provide an annual breakdown?**

Children’s Community Services provide a range of services across both our community and hospital-based teams.

Given the range of services offered by over 50 teams within Children’s Services - including Gateway, Family Support, Looked After Children, Leaving Care, Court Children’s, Residential, Fostering/Adoption, Early Years Services, Hospital Teams and specialist services such as the Child Care Centre and Family Centre Services - the caseload sizes are specific to the role and remit of the teams.

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It would require more than 18 hours work to accurately provide a response to this point, based on the data collation reports involved over the period of 5 years.

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.

Belfast Trust has however been able to provide the above staffing information within the required timescale.