

Our Ref: NG/RM/25429
Date: 9th January 2026

Nicola Griffiths
Deputy Director of Governance
North Staffordshire Combined Healthcare NHS Trust
Lawton House
Bellringer Road
Trentham
ST4 8HH

Reception: 0300 123 1535

Dear

Freedom of Information Act Request

I am writing in response to your e-mail of the 9th December 2025. Your request has been processed using the Trust's procedures for the disclosure of information under the Freedom of Information Act (2000).

Requested information:

I am writing to you under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to request the following information.

If you have more than one community or mental health team/ setting/ service in your Trust, we would like you to return data for each team/setting/service that cares for babies, children, and young people (aged 0-17). Please include teams/ settings/ services that also provide healthcare support to people outside of the age range (18 year olds, 19 year olds, adults), if they also provide support to 0-17 year olds.

Please see Appendices 1 and 2 attached.

If you are dissatisfied with the handling of your request, you have the right to ask for an internal review of the management of your request. Internal review requests should be submitted within two months of the date of receipt of the response to your original letter and should be addressed to: Dr Buki Adeyemo, Chief Executive, North Staffordshire Combined Healthcare Trust, Trust Headquarters, Lawton House, Bellringer Road, Trentham, ST4 8HH. If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF.

Yours sincerely



Nicola Griffiths
Deputy Director of Governance

If you have more than one community or mental health team/setting/service in your Trust, we would like you to return data for [each team/setting/service](#) that cares for babies, children, and young people (aged 0-17). Please include team/setting/services that also provide healthcare support to people outside of the age range (18 year olds, 19 year olds, adults), if they also provide support to 0-17 year olds.

Please insert more rows into each table if not enough rows are provided.

Section 1: Information about completing this FOI request

Who has contributed to filling in this FOI response? Please provide job titles, not names.	Have Health Play Specialists and/or health play qualified workers involved in compiling the response? [Y/N]
Senior Service Manager	N

Section 2: Information about numbers of teams/settings/services, and types of play provision.

Between 1st April 2024 and 31st March 2025, for each team/setting/service that cares for 0-17 year olds, I would like to know information about the numbers of 0-17 year olds seen and the types of play provision. To provide this information, please use the following table.

Name of team/setting/service that cares for 0-17 year olds	Number of 0-17 year olds seen by this team/setting/service	If applicable, number of beds for 0-17 year olds in this team/setting/service	Are 0-17 year olds supported by a health play professional* in this team/setting/service? [Y/N]	Do 0-17 year olds have access to an indoor playroom/area in this team/setting/service? [Y/N]	Do 0-17 year olds have access to a designated outdoor play area in this team/setting/service? [Y/N]	Do 0-17 year olds have access to play resources such as toys, games, activities etc in this team/setting/service? [Y/N]	If support is provided to 0-17 year olds at home, do they have access to play services provided by your team/setting/service? [Y/N]
Intensive Support Hub	147	NA	Y	No	No	No	No
Darwin Centre	37	14	No	No but low stimulus / sensory peace pod available	Yes	yes	NA
Short Breaks Service	51	0	No	yes	yes	yes	NA
CYP LD	303	NA	No	No	No	No	No
Keyworkers	24	NA	No	No	No	Yes	NA
Paediatric Psychology	23	NA	No	No	No	Yes	No

*Please see Appendix A below for list of job titles

Section 3: Information about the current health play professionals

For each team/setting/service that cares for 0-17 year olds, I would like to know information about the current health play professionals. To provide this information, please use the following table.

Name of team/setting/service that cares for 0-17 year olds	Which Directorate(s) do health play professionals sit in?	How many health play professionals work in this team/setting/service?	How many of these are qualified Health Play Specialists (including Senior Health Play Specialists)?	How many other health professionals (aside from health play professionals) have responsibility for delivering play?	Do you employ any other health professionals who have a health play specialism qualification, but their job title does not include the word 'play'? [Y/N]. If yes, please tell us their job title(s).
Intensive Support Hub	Specialist Directorate	2	No	0	No

Also, for each team/setting/service that cares for 0-17 year olds, I would like to know what health play job titles there are and some subsequent information about their roles. To provide this information, please use the following table.

NB If multiple members of staff share the same job title, please list each staff member separately as the subsequent information about their roles might differ. Please see Appendix A below for a list of Play Team job titles and their definitions (not exhaustive but can help to make distinctions between each job title).

Name of team/setting/service that cares for 0-17 year olds	What is their job title?	Are they registered with the Society of Health Play Specialists (SoHPS)?	What is their salary band?	What is their WTE? (e.g., 1, 0.5, 0.6 etc)	What is their average number of hours per shift?	Are there occasions where they work beyond their shift hours? [Y/N]. (If yes, what is their average number of hours worked beyond their shift hours?)	Do they have a qualification in health play specialism? [Y/N] (No but currently completing the course)	What play related qualifications do they have? Please list
Intensive Support Hub	Youth Workers	No		0.6 x 2	12 hours	no	no	None. This role is focused on engagement work, using VSA info, community partners, activities, education etc.

Section 4: Information about recruiting health play professionals

For each team/setting/service that cares for 0-17 year olds, I would like to know information about recruiting health play professionals. To provide this information, please use the following table.

Name of team/setting/service that cares for 0-17 year olds	When recruiting a Health Play Specialist, do you request a qualification in health play specialism as essential criteria for the role? [Y/N]	When recruiting a Health Play Specialist, do you request being registered with the Society of Health Play Specialists (SoHPS) as essential criteria for the role? [Y/N]	Do you recruit people into a Health Play Specialist role, that do not have a qualification in health play specialism? [Y/N]. If yes, is it mandatory for them to do this qualification when in post? [Y/N]	Is it mandatory for Health Play Specialists to be registered with SoHPS in your Trust? [Y/N]
Intensive Support Hub	No, not required for this role	No	No	No

Section 5: Information about play coverage.

For each team/setting/service that cares for 0-17 year olds, I would like to know about the play coverage in terms of hours/times of day. To provide this information, please use the following table.

Name of team/setting/service that cares for 0-17 year olds	What hours are health play professionals available on weekdays? (e.g. 9-5, 24/7 etc)	What hours are health play professionals available on weekends? (e.g. 9-5, 24/7 etc). (write N/A if not available on weekends)	What are the opening hours of the indoor playroom/area on weekdays? (e.g. 9-5, 24/7 etc) (write N/A if no indoor playroom)	What are the opening hours of the indoor playroom/area on weekends? (e.g. 9-5, 24/7 etc) (write N/A if no indoor playroom)	What are the opening hours of the designated outdoor play area on weekdays? (e.g. 9-5, 24/7 etc) (write N/A if no outdoor play area)	What are the opening hours of the designated outdoor play area on weekends? (e.g. 9-5, 24/7 etc) (write N/A if no outdoor play area)
Intensive Support Hub	Variable, shift work	Variable, shift work	NA	NA	NA	NA

Also, for each team/setting/service that cares for 0-17 year olds, I would like to know the following information:

Name of team/setting/service that cares for 0-17 year olds	Do you have any other measures/provisions that make this team/setting/service more welcoming or playful for children and young people before attending an appointment/being admitted? [Y/N]	Do you have any other measures/provisions that make this team/setting/service more welcoming or playful for children and young people during their appointment/admission? [Y/N]
	If yes, please tell us what these measures/provisions are.	If yes, please tell us what these measures/provisions are.
Intensive Support Hub	NA	No
Darwin Centre	We have a range of sensory toys, interactive toys and technology, and child-friendly environment that supports young people to create a welcoming, engaging, and developmentally appropriate environment.	We have a range of sensory toys, interactive toys and technology, and child-friendly environment that supports young people to create a welcoming, engaging, and developmentally appropriate environment.
Short Breaks Service	We complete a full assessment, so when they arrive we will have activities set up that they have stated they enjoy.	We have a range of sensory toys, interactive toys and technology, and child-friendly environment that supports young people to create a welcoming, engaging, and developmentally appropriate environment.
CYP LD	No	We have tried to make the waiting list and clinic space more child friendly with toys and games and child friendly accessible information.
Keyworkers	No	We have a small collection of toys and fidgets due to working with children with ASD and or a Learning Disability. We also have tried to make the waiting list and clinic space more child friendly with toys and games and child friendly accessible information.
Paediatric Psychology	Rooms used for waiting for appointments/child/young person centred but Children do not tend to wait long for their appointments and will generally be seen straight away.	Rooms used for the appointments are welcoming and child/young person friendly. However, there is a difference between toys and games at Dragon Square.

Section 6: Information about play budgets.

For each team/setting/service that cares for 0-17 year olds, I would like to know information about the annual budget for play.
To provide this information, please use the following table.

Name of team/setting/service that cares for 0-17-year-olds	Is there an annual budget specifically for play resources and materials (aside from health play staff)? [Y/N] No but resources can be purchased through a central budget.	Is there an annual budget specifically for health play staffing and training? [Y/N]
Intensive Support Hub	No but resources can be purchased through a central budget	N
Darwin Centre	No but resources can be purchased through a central budget	N
Short Breaks Service	No but resources can be purchased through a central budget	N
CYP LD	No but resources can be purchased through a central budget	N
Keyworkers	No but resources can be purchased through a central budget	N
Paediatric Psychology	No but resources can be purchased through a central budget	N

If you answered 'Yes' or 'No' but resources can be purchased through a central budget, I would also like to know what the annual budget was for play in healthcare in FY24-25 (between 1st April 2024 and 31st March 2025) and what it was spent on.
To provide this information, please use the following table.

Name of team/setting/service that cares for 0-17 year olds	What was the approximate overall annual budget available for play in FY24-25? (In £)	How much of the budget was spent on Health Play Professional staffing? (In £)	How much of the budget was spent on resources and materials in play? (In £)	How much of the budget was spent on commissioning/paying for external organisations/individuals providing play on an ad-hoc basis? (In £) [please list these organisations/individuals]	How much of the budget was spent on health play staff training and development budget? (In £)
Unable to identify					

For each team/setting/service that cares for 0-17 year olds, I would like to know who funds the budget for play staff / resources (e.g., ICB, Trust, Charity, a Fundraising Group, other donations, etc.).
To provide this information, please use the following table. If more than one funder, please specify in the table below who they are and what they are funding.

Name of team/setting/service that cares for 0-17 year olds	Funder/source of donations	Value of fund/donation (In £)	What are they funding? (e.g., health play professionals, toys and resources, external entertainers)
Intensive Support Hub	Trust / ICB	£80,000 approx (2x band 6)	Youth workers x 2

Section 7: Information about the Play Well Toolkit.

For each team/setting/service that cares for 0-17 year olds, I would like to know information about the Play Well Toolkit.
To provide this information, please use the following table.

Is your Trust aware of the Play Well Toolkit? [Y/N]
No - Specialist Directorate only

If 'Yes', please complete this table:

Name of team/setting/service that cares for 0-17 year olds	Has this team/setting/service adopted or committed to adopt the Play Well recommended standards? [Y/N]. If yes, have they completed the Play Well quality checklist? [Y/N]. If yes, please share a copy of the completed checklist. If no, please say why (i.e., a team/setting/service is not intending to adopt the recommended standards).	Do you have any other guidance/policies on how play should be delivered in your Trust? [Y/N]. If yes, please share it with us if you can.	Starlight has partnered with NHS England to develop and publish the Play Well Toolkit. Starlight also provides support and training on the implementation on the toolkit. If your Trust would benefit from support and training on the implementation of the Play Well Toolkit and would like to hear more, please provide the relevant contact details to share this information.

Section 8: Information about measurement tools for 0-17 year olds

For each team/setting/service that cares for 0-17 year olds, I would like to know information about measurement tools.
To provide this information, please use the following table (you may need to list each team/setting/service in multiple rows to cover all wards/departments).

Name of team/setting/service that cares for 0-17 year olds	Does this team/setting/service measure procedural anxiety for 0-17 year olds? [Y/N] If Yes, please share the measurement tools with us if you can.	Does this team/setting/service measure pain for 0-17 year olds? [Y/N] If Yes, please share the measurement tools with us if you can.	Does this team/setting/service measure emotions/how they are feeling for 0-17 year olds? [Y/N] If Yes, please share the measurement tools with us if you can.	Does this team/setting/service evaluate the impact of play? [Y/N] If yes, do they evaluate the efficiencies and cost benefits of play? [Y/N] If yes, please share any reports or evidence with us if you can.
Intensive Support Hub	No	No	Yes Outcome star	No
Darwin Centre	The use of anxiety measures within our service is not standardised to a single tool, as assessments are tailored to the presentation and	Yes. When required, our service uses a recognised and nationally adopted pain assessment tool. We utilise the	The use of emotions/feelings measures within our service is not standardised to a single tool, as	No
Short Breaks Service	No	Yes Green Mouldier pain tool	No our CYPs have a severe learning disability. We do use PIC/Chameleon cards/Makaton where appropriate.	No
CYP LD	No	Yes 4-D Nursing model pain picture	Y team created measure	No
Keyworkers	No- not in scope of this service	No- not in scope of this service	scores during the Initial Plan to gauge where the young person and family are at in terms of emotions and feelings before support has commenced, we collect this	No
Paediatric Psychology	No one specific measure, generally, we adopt an individualised approach to desensitisation, scaling etc, as there are so many different types of anxiety in relation to procedures. It is important that	Again, measures for pain are individualised but tend to be along the lines of The faces pain scale, numeric pain scales	We tend to use the CRS which is a numeric scaling or faces scaling measure and can be used sessionally as well as post input (at end of all sessions) However	No

Appendix A

Play Team job titles and their definitions (not an exhaustive list):

- Health Play Specialists... are clinical support professionals with the skills to safeguard children's emotional and mental health during treatment and procedures, and throughout their healthcare journeys. They will often also manage the play team. Health Play Specialists should have completed, or be completing, a Diploma in Health Play Specialism.
- Playworkers... provide opportunities for children to play, support them to play, engage with them through play and thereby build trusting relationships and communication with young patients.
- Youth workers... ensure adolescents receiving medical treatment can receive age-appropriate support, have their individual needs assessed and are referred to resources and services that align with their interests and needs. A youth worker is essential in supporting a young person into adult care, if required, and sourcing services that the young person can use to support them during this transition.
- Play Therapists... have a qualification in play therapy and help children to make sense of difficult life experiences, or complex psychological issues through play and will work to improve children's mental health, emotional well-being, learning capabilities and social relationships.

If you have more than one community or mental health team/setting/service in your Trust, we would like you to return data each team/setting/service that cares for babies, children, and young people (aged 0-17)

Please include teams/settings/services that also provide healthcare support to people outside of the age range (16 year olds, 19 year olds, adults), if they also provide support to 0-17 year olds.

Please insert more rows into each table if not enough rows are provided.

Section 1: Information about completing this FOI request

Who has contributed to filling in this FOI response? Please provide job titles, not names.	Were Health Play Specialists and/or health play qualified workers involved in compiling the response? [Y/N]
service manager	N

Section 2: Information about numbers of teams/settings/services, and types of play provision

Between 1st April 2024 and 31st March 2025, for each team/setting/service that cares for 0-17 year olds, I would like to know information about the numbers of 0-17 year olds seen and the types of play provision.

To provide this information, please use the following table.

Name of team/setting/service that cares for 0-17 year olds	Number of 0-17 year olds seen by this team/setting/service	If applicable, number of beds for 0-17 year olds in this team/setting/service	Are 0-17 year olds supported by a health play professional* in this team/setting/service? [Y/N]	Do 0-17 year olds have access to an <u>indoor</u> playroom/area in this team/setting/service? [Y/N]	Do 0-17 year olds have access to a designated <u>outdoor</u> play area in this team/setting/service? [Y/N]	Do 0-17 year olds have access to play resources such as toys, games, activities etc in this team/setting/service? [Y/N]	If support is provided to 0-17 year olds at home, do they have access to play services provided by your team/setting/service? [Y/N]
LAC		250	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Core CAMHS		1500	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
CYP ADHD		250	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

*Please see Appendix A below for list of job titles

Section 3: Information about the current health play professionals

For each team/setting/service that cares for 0-17 year olds, I would like to know information about the current health play professionals.

To provide this information, please use the following table.

Name of team/setting/service that cares for 0-17 year olds	Which Directorate(s) do health play professionals sit in?	How many health play professionals work in this team/setting/service?	How many of these are qualified Health Play Specialists (including Senior Health Play Specialists)?	How many other health professionals (aside from health play professionals) have responsibility for delivering play?	Do you employ any other health professionals who have a health play specialism qualification, but their job title does not include the word 'play'? [Y/N]. If yes, please tell us their job title(s).
All teams listed above	Community Directorate	4	4	0	0

Also, for each team/setting/service that cares for 0-17 year olds, I would like to know what health play job titles there are and some subsequent information about their roles.

To provide this information, please use the following table.

NB If multiple members of staff share the same job title, please list each staff member separately as the subsequent information about their roles might differ.

Please see Appendix A below for a list of Play Team job titles and their definitions (not exhaustive but can help to make distinctions between each job title).

Name of team/setting/service that cares for 0-17 year olds	What is their job title?	Are they registered with the Society of Health Play Specialists (SoHPS)?	What is their salary band?	What is their WTE? (e.g., 1, 0.8, 0.5 etc)	What is their average number of hours per shift?	Are there occasions where they work beyond their shift hours? [Y/N]. (If yes, what is their average number of hours worked beyond their shift hours?)	Do they have a qualification in health play specialist? [Y/N]No but currently completing the course)	What play-related qualifications do they have? Please list
All above named teams	Play Worker	N		5	1	8N	Y	PG cert

Section 4: Information about recruiting health play professionals

For each team/setting/service that cares for 0-17 year olds, I would like to know information about recruiting health play professionals.

To provide this information, please use the following table.

Name of team/setting/service that cares for 0-17 year olds	When recruiting a Health Play Specialist, do you request a qualification in health play specialism as essential criteria for the role? [Y/N]	When recruiting a Health Play Specialist, do you request being registered with the Society of Health Play Specialists (SoHPS) as essential criteria for the role? [Y/N]	Do you recruit people into a Health Play Specialist role, that do not have a qualification in health play specialism? [Y/N]. If yes, is it mandatory for them to do this qualification when in post? [Y/N]	Is it mandatory for Health Play Specialists to be registered with SoHPS in your Trust? [Y/N]
All teams listed above	Y	N	N	N

Section 5: Information about play coverage

For each team/setting/service that cares for 0-17 year olds, I would like to know about the play coverage in terms of hours/times of day.

To provide this information, please use the following table.

Name of team/setting/service that cares for 0-17 year olds	What hours are health play professionals available on <u>weekdays</u> ? (e.g., 9-5, 24/7 etc)	What hours are health play professionals available on <u>weekends</u> ? (e.g., 9-5, 24/7 etc) (write N/A if not available on weekends)	What are the opening hours of the <u>indoor</u> playroom/area on <u>weekdays</u> ? (e.g., 9-5, 24/7 etc) (write N/A if no indoor playroom)	What are the opening hours of the <u>indoor</u> playroom/area on <u>weekends</u> ? (e.g., 9-5, 24/7 etc) (write N/A if no indoor playroom)	What are the opening hours of the designated <u>outdoor</u> play area on <u>weekdays</u> ? (e.g., 9-5, 24/7 etc) (write N/A if no outdoor play area)	What are the opening hours of the designated <u>outdoor</u> play area on <u>weekends</u> ? (e.g., 9-5, 24/7 etc) (write N/A if no outdoor play area)
All teams listed above	9-5	0	9-5	0	9-5	0

Also, for each team/setting/service that cares for 0-17 year olds, I would like to know the following information:

Name of team/setting/service that cares for 0-17-year-olds	Do you have any other measures/provisions that make this team/setting/service more welcoming or playful for children and young people before attending an appointment/being admitted? [Y/N]	Do you have any other measures/provisions that make this team/setting/service more welcoming or playful for children and young people during their appointment/admission? [Y/N]
	If yes, please tell us what these measures/provisions are.	If yes, please tell us what these measures/provisions are.
All teams listed above	N	Y - Artwork on walls, toys

Section 6: Information about play budgets

For each team/setting/service that cares for 0-17 year olds, I would like to know information about the annual budget for play.

To provide this information, please use the following table.

Name of team/setting/service that cares for 0-17-year-olds	Is there an annual budget specifically for play resources and materials (aside from health play staff)? [Y/N]No but resources can be purchased through a central budget).	Is there an annual budget specifically for health play staffing and training? [Y/N]

all teams listed above	No, but resources can be purchased through a central budget	N

If you answered 'yes' or 'No' but resources can be purchased through a central budget', I would also like to know what the annual budget was for play in healthcare in FY24-25 (between 1st April 2024 and 31st March 2025) and what it was spent on. To provide this information, please use the following table.

Name of team/setting/service that cares for 0-17 year olds	What was the approximate overall annual budget available for play in FY24-25? (in £)	How much of the budget was spent on Health Play Professional staffing? (in £)	How much of the budget was spent on resources and materials in play? (in £)	How much of the budget was spent on commissioning/paying for external organisations/individuals providing play on an ad-hoc basis? (in £) (please list these organisations/individuals)	How much of the budget was spent on health play staff training and development budget? (in £)
Not captured					

For each team/setting/service that cares for 0-17 year olds, I would like to know who funds the budget for play staff / resources (e.g., ICB, Trust, Charity, a Fundraising Group, other donations, etc.). To provide this information, please use the following table. If more than one funder, please specify in the table below who they are and what they are funding.

Name of team/setting/service that cares for 0-17 year olds	Funder/source of donations	Value of fund/donation (in £)	What are they funding? (e.g., health play professionals, toys and resources, external entertainers)
N/A			

Section 7: Information about the Play Well Toolkit

For each team/setting/service that cares for 0-17 year olds, I would like to know information about the Play Well Toolkit. To provide this information, please use the following table.

Is your Trust aware of the Play Well Toolkit? [Y/N]
No

If 'Yes', please complete this table:

Name of team/setting/service that cares for 0-17 year olds	Has this team/setting/service adopted or committed to adopt the Play Well recommended standards? [Y/N]. If yes, have they completed the Play Well quality checklist? [Y/N]. If yes, please share a copy of the completed checklist. If no, please say why (i.e., a team/setting/service is not intending to adopt the recommended standards).	Do you have any other guidance/policies on how play should be delivered in your Trust? [Y/N]. If yes, please share it with us if you can.	Starlight has partnered with NHS England to develop and publish the Play Well Toolkit. Starlight also provides support and training on the implementation of the toolkit. If your Trust would benefit from support and training on the implementation of the Play Well Toolkit and would like to hear more, please provide the relevant contact details to share this information.
All teams	N, not enough knowledge about this	Y, decided individually by our therapy teams	Lee Mason- Service Manager- lee.mason@combined.nhs.uk

Section 8: Information about measurement tools for 0-17 year olds

For each team/setting/service that cares for 0-17 year olds, I would like to know information about measurement tools. To provide this information, please use the following table (you may need to list each team/setting/service in multiple rows to cover all wards/departments).

Name of team/setting/service that cares for 0-17 year olds	Does this team/setting/service measure procedural anxiety for 0-17 year olds? [Y/N] If Yes, please share the measurement tools with us if you can.	Does this team/setting/service measure pain for 0-17 year olds? [Y/N] If Yes, please share the measurement tools with us if you can.	Does this team/setting/service measure emotions/how they are feeling for 0-17 year olds? [Y/N] If Yes, please share the measurement tools with us if you can.	Does this team/setting/service evaluate the impact of play? [Y/N] If yes, do they evaluate the efficiencies and cost benefits of play? [Y/N] If yes, please share any reports or evidence with us if you can.
N/A				

Appendix A

Play Team job titles and their definitions (not an exhaustive list):

- **Health Play Specialists...** are clinical support professionals with the skills to safeguard children's emotional and mental health during treatment and procedures, and throughout their healthcare journeys. They will often also manage the play team. Health Pla Specialists should have completed, or be completing, a Diploma in Health Play Specialism.
- **Playworkers...** provide opportunities for children to play, support them to play, engage with them through play and thereby build trusting relationships and communication with young patients.
- **Youth workers...** ensure adolescents receiving medical treatment can receive age-appropriate support, have their individual needs assessed and are referred to resources and services that align with their interests and needs. A youth worker is essential in supporting a young person into adult care, if required, and sourcing services that the young person can use to support them during this transition.
- **Play Therapists...** have a qualification in play therapy and help children to make sense of difficult life experiences, or complex psychological issues through play and will work to improve children's mental health, emotional well-being, learning capabilities and social relationships.