

Questions:

1. How did the DoH/SPPG become aware of the involvement of Liaison Care/Liaison Group with NI health trusts?
2. What dealings has the DoH/SPPG had with Liaison Care/Liaison Group?
3. Did any NI health trust engage with the DoH/SPPG in relation to commissioning Liaison Care/Liaison Group? If so, what are the details of these?
4. Subsequent to the RQIA ordering Liaison Care/Liaison Group's activities in Northern Ireland to stop on 26-3-26, what communications has the DoH/SPPG had with Trusts or other bodies in relation to the company operating in NI?
5. We are asking for copies of any correspondence to or from the DoH/SPPG in relation to Liaison Care/Liaison Group.

Responses:

1. In July 2025, the Northern Health and Social Care Trust (NHSCT) advised the Strategic Planning and Performance Group (SPPG) of the DOH Learning Disability Services that the Trust had procured the services of a liaison team from an England-based, multi-disciplinary company. The Trust advised the team was currently reviewing 25 high-cost cases, a number of which related to individuals with Learning Disability. The NHSCT noted ongoing discussion regarding the financial implications of these high-cost cases and that the review aimed to support more sustainable care planning and inform future commissioning decisions. In September 2025, SPPG Learning Disability Services became aware of audits being undertaken in a number of Health and Social Care Trusts (HSCTs) re High Cost Cases by the same organisation that had conducted the NHSCT audit.

Neither the DoH nor SPPG had any role in approaching or commissioning Liaison Care to undertake any review activity in any Trust area. It is considered appropriate for Trusts as legal entities to regularly review the care services provided to ensure that they continue to meet individual's needs and are being delivered to a satisfactory level. To do this effectively, HSCTs are expected by DOH to engage with the service user, informal carers, family members, service providers and any others who are appropriately positioned to contribute to the review process.

SPPG received an email from the Chief Executive of the Independent Health Care Providers (IHCP) on 8 February 2026. This email was copied to colleagues in DOH Policy and raised concern in relation to the experiences of providers and service users who had been involved in review activity being undertaken by Liaison Care. This was followed up by a further email from IHCP on 5 March 2026, which reiterated this position. I refer you to appendix 1.

On 27 March 2026, SPPG were formally notified regarding concerns raised by RQIA in respect of Liaison Care. I refer you to appendix 2.

On 23 March 2026, correspondence was sent to the Health Minister's Office raising concerns regarding a review of domiciliary care packages undertaken by Liaison Care Group. SPPG Officials submitted a response to Minister's Office for issue. I refer you to appendix 3.

Following a Health Committee Meeting on 26 March 2026, a query was raised with the Health Minister's Office behalf of the Health Committee in respect of Liaison Care. I refer you to appendix 4.

Further communications are attached, I refer you to appendices 5 and 6.

2. The DoH/SPPG has had no dealings with the Liaison Care/Liaison Group.
3. The Trusts did not engage with the DOH/SPPG in relation to commissioning Liaison Care and permission to undertake this work was neither sought nor given. However, as noted above, the NHSCT indicated in July 2025 that the Trust had procured the services of a liaison team from an England-based, multi-disciplinary company in a review of High Cost Cases. In September 2025, SPPG Learning Disability Services became aware of audits being undertaken in a number of HSCTs re High Cost Cases by the same organisation that had conducted the NHSCT audit.

It is appropriate for the HSCTs to act autonomously in engaging the independent sector, and it is not necessary for the Department/SPPG to have direct oversight of these arrangements, within a context where Trusts are required to routinely review service provision to ensure that the services provided effectively meet service user assessed need.

4. On 30 March 2026, the DOH/SPPG requested information from HSCTs in relation to the commissioning process regarding Liaison Care. All Trusts provided a response to SPPG. I refer you to appendices 7 through 14.
5. I refer you to appendices 1 through 14.

Throughout the documents a number of redactions have been applied, further detail in respect of these exemptions can be found in the exemption schedule in appendix 15.

Appendices may be requested from the Information Management Branch (IMB) if required at the following address:

- FOI@health-ni.gov.uk

Date response issued: 15th May 2026
Reference Number: DOH 2026-0087