

QUESTION

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, I would like to request the following information in relation to third-party contributions (top-up fees) for residential and nursing home placements.

1. Since **17 February 2026**, how many service users funded by the Trust/Department have entered residential or nursing home placements involving a **third-party contribution (top-up fee)**?
2. Since **17 February 2026**, how many requests for third-party contributions have been:
 - Approved
 - Refused
3. Please provide a copy of any policy, guidance, regional strategy, regional agreement, commissioning framework, operational procedure or other document introduced, agreed or implemented on or around **17 February 2026** relating to:
 - third-party contributions (top-up fees);
 - residential care placements;
 - nursing home placements;
 - dementia nursing placements.
4. If no such document exists, please confirm this.
5. Please provide copies of any internal guidance, briefing notes, presentations or instructions issued to Trust staff since **17 February 2026** regarding changes to third-party contribution arrangements or care home placement processes.
6. Please confirm whether **HSC Circular (ECCU) 1/2010** remains in force in relation to third-party contributions for residential and nursing home placements. If any part of that guidance has been superseded, amended or

replaced, please identify the document that supersedes it and the date it came into effect.

7. Please confirm whether any changes introduced on or after **17 February 2026** altered the circumstances in which a family member may pay a third-party contribution towards a residential or nursing home placement.
8. Please confirm whether the **Department of Health** approved, issued or endorsed any regional strategy, policy, circular, commissioning framework or guidance on or around **17 February 2026** relating to:
 - dementia nursing home placements;
 - third-party contributions;
 - residential or nursing home funding.

If such a document exists, please provide a copy together with the date it was approved and implemented. If no such document exists, please confirm this.

9. If the policy or strategy referred to above was issued by another organisation (for example, another HSC body or a regional commissioning group), please identify:
 - the name of the organisation;
 - the title of the document;
 - the date it was approved;
 - and where a copy can be obtained.

I would prefer to receive the information electronically by email.

RESPONSE

1. Since **17 February 2026**, how many service users funded by the Trust/Department have entered residential or nursing home placements involving a **third-party contribution (top-up fee)**?

This information is not held by the Department.

2. Since **17 February 2026**, how many requests for third-party contributions have been:

- Approved
- Refused

This information is not held by the Department.

3. Please provide a copy of any policy, guidance, regional strategy, regional agreement, commissioning framework, operational procedure or other document introduced, agreed or implemented on or around **17 February 2026** relating to:
 - third-party contributions (top-up fees);
 - residential care placements;
 - nursing home placements;
 - dementia nursing placements.

In respect of third-party contributions (top up fees), residential care placements and nursing home placements, extant Departmental guidance is set out within HSC Circular (ECCU) 2/2026, a copy of which is attached to this response.

In respect of dementia nursing placements, a Service Specification for the Provision of Block Booked Dementia Care Home Placements (Dementia (DE) Stratified Provider Model was issued by the Health and Social Care Trusts on 29th January 2026 with relevant supporting documentation. (**Documents attached**)

4. If no such document exists, please confirm this.

Please see response to Question 3.

5. Please provide copies of any internal guidance, briefing notes, presentations or instructions issued to Trust staff since **17 February 2026** regarding changes to third-party contribution arrangements or care home placement processes.

Please see response to Question 3 and the document attached to this response. Extant Departmental Guidance for both of the areas referred to is set

out in HSC Circular (ECCU) 2/2026, a copy of which is attached to this response.

6. Please confirm whether **HSC Circular (ECCU) 1/2010** remains in force in relation to third-party contributions for residential and nursing home placements. If any part of that guidance has been superseded, amended or replaced, please identify the document that supersedes it and the date it came into effect.

HSC Circular (ECCU) 1/2010 was in part replaced by HSC Circular (ECCU) 2/2026 issued on 27th May 2026. This amended HSC Circular (ECCU) 1/2010 by :-

- Removing all references to Continuing Healthcare (CHC);
- removing references to the Health and Social Care Board (HSCB) and replace with SPPG; and
- updating the Circular in references to complaints, which now includes the new the HSC Model Complaints Handling Complaints Procedure which came into effect on 1st January 2026.

I have attached a copy of HSC Circular (ECCU) 1/2010 to this response.

7. Please confirm whether any changes introduced on or after **17 February 2026** altered the circumstances in which a family member may pay a third-party contribution towards a residential or nursing home placement.

Please see response to Questions 3 and 6 and the attached documentation to this response. The introduction of the DE Stratified Provider Model was led by the Health and Social Care Trusts through the Provider Collaborative. The issue of the applicability of third-party contributions under this model are operational issues which would be the responsibility of the Trusts.

8. Please confirm whether the **Department of Health** approved, issued or endorsed any regional strategy, policy, circular, commissioning framework or guidance on or around **17 February 2026** relating to:
- dementia nursing home placements;
 - third-party contributions;
 - residential or nursing home funding.

If such a document exists, please provide a copy together with the date it was approved and implemented. If no such document exists, please confirm this.

Please see response to Questions 3 and 6 and the attached documentation to this response.

9. If the policy or strategy referred to above was issued by another organisation (for example, another HSC body or a regional commissioning group), please identify:
- the name of the organisation;
 - the title of the document;
 - the date it was approved;
 - and where a copy can be obtained.

Please see response to Questions 3 and 6 and the attached documentation to this response. Policy and Guidance in these areas is developed and set by the Department after consultation with HSC colleagues across all relevant bodies and groupings. The introduction of the DE Stratified Provider Model represented a change in operational guidance rather than a revised Departmental policy.

REF: DOH/2026-0172
ISSUED: 10 SEPTEMBER 2026