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| <b>Reference:</b>       | FOI.3563.20                                    |
| <b>Subject:</b>         | Mental health referral times and waiting lists |
| <b>Date of Request:</b> | 1 September 2020                               |

**Requested:**

1. I would like to know, how many people have been referred or self-referred to you during this virus pandemic compared with the same timeframe 12 months ago. If possible could you categorise these patients to age, sex, district, their diagnosis and treatment.
2. Long waiting lists, for psychiatric and psychological care, diagnosis and treatment has been known for some time. Were COVID related patients given priority? Or are they still awaiting diagnosis and treatment? If so how many, by age, district, sex, how long they have been waiting, and how long will they be waiting for analysis and treatment.
3. Looking at psychological treatments, Betsi Cadwaladr were said to have a two-year waiting list prior to COVID, and at one time Wrexham Maelors mental health services had a five year waiting list.

Can we have the latest breakdown of waiting times, age, where from etc?

4. We also understand you are employing agency psychologists, and some staff members have a private contract outside their NHS work. Can you give us a breakdown of this and the cost?
5. Finally, there is a general consensus amongst the various health experts which forecasts a huge increase in mental health patients following this pandemic from grief, to PTSD to depression etc. What have you prepared to deal with this increase in both staff levels and counselling and psychological intervention.

**Clarified:**

I am looking for referrals to the psychiatric hospital during the COVID lockdown, from March to this week. Were these treated and kept as in patients and were you able to cope with the numbers? Did you have COVID in the psychiatric unit?

**Response:**

Hywel Dda University Health Board (UHB) is unable to provide you with all of the information requested, as it is estimated that the cost of answering your request would exceed the “appropriate level” as stated in the Freedom of Information (Fees and Appropriate Limit) Regulations 2004. The “appropriate level” represents the estimated cost of one person spending 18 hours or (2 ½ working days) in determining whether the UHB holds the information, and locating, retrieving and extracting the information.

In order to provide you with all of the requested information, the UHB would need to undertake a manual trawl of all Adult Mental Health (AMH) records to identify any information that fulfils your request. The UHB’s Mental Health services are currently implementing a new electronic patient administration system; as a result, not all information is recorded centrally at this time.

The UHB is therefore applying an exemption under Section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOI), which provides an exemption from a public authority’s obligation to comply with a request for information, where the cost of compliance is estimated to exceed the appropriate limit.

Under section 16 of the FOI, we are required, as a public authority, to provide advice and assistance so far as it is reasonable, to individuals who have made a request under the FOI and therefore can provide you with some of the information requested.

1. The UHB provides, within the tables below, the number of referrals to the Intensive Psychological Therapies Service (IPTS) during the COVID-19 pandemic, by gender and county, for the periods March to July 2019 and March to July 2020.

| County           | March to July 2019 |       |       |
|------------------|--------------------|-------|-------|
|                  | Female             | Male  | Other |
| Carmarthenshire  | 2,108              | 1,446 | 3     |
| Ceredigion       | 920                | 646   | 0     |
| Pembrokeshire    | 1,381              | 1,185 | 2     |
| Location unknown | 95                 | 72    | 0     |
| County           | March to July 2020 |       |       |
|                  | Female             | Male  | Other |
| Carmarthenshire  | 1,336              | 881   | 0     |
| Ceredigion       | 621                | 413   | 0     |
| Pembrokeshire    | 970                | 752   | 2     |
| Location unknown | 621                | 35    | 0     |

2. The UHB does not hold a central record of referrals received into the IPTS specifically relating to COVID-19; to identify these patients we would need to undertake a manual trawl patient records. Therefore, this part of your request is exempt under section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000; please see full details of the exemption above.

The UHB can confirm that IPTS have continued to assess the individual needs of all patients and place them on the most appropriate modality intervention treatment waiting list.

3. The UHB provides, within the tables below, the IPTS waiting times in days, by month, for March to September 2019 and 2020.

| Waiting times   | March 2019 | April 2019 | May 2019 | June 2019 | July 2019 | August 2019 | September 2019 |
|-----------------|------------|------------|----------|-----------|-----------|-------------|----------------|
| Up to 84 days   | 526        | 564        | 591      | 549       | 507       | 429         | 443            |
| 85 to 126 days  | 178        | 205        | 231      | 237       | 235       | 236         | 189            |
| 127 to 182 days | 184        | 183        | 191      | 232       | 227       | 231         | 229            |
| 182 to 252 days | 152        | 156        | 162      | 129       | 129       | 159         | 178            |
| 253 to 364 days | 155        | 172        | 178      | 174       | 167       | 156         | 149            |
| Over 365 days   | 199        | 224        | 240      | 254       | 262       | 271         | 298            |

| Waiting times   | March 2020 | April 2020 | May 2020 | June 2020 | July 2020 | August 2020 | September 2020 |
|-----------------|------------|------------|----------|-----------|-----------|-------------|----------------|
| Up to 84 days   | 404        | 309        | 235      | 236       | 233       | 212         | 196            |
| 85 to 126 days  | 152        | 171        | 189      | 123       | 104       | 111         | 115            |
| 127 to 182 days | 209        | 210        | 201      | 230       | 197       | 142         | 120            |
| 182 to 252 days | 182        | 211        | 235      | 219       | 241       | 273         | 243            |
| 253 to 364 days | 198        | 209        | 219      | 248       | 299       | 326         | 336            |
| Over 365 days   | 378        | 408        | 421      | 489       | 533       | 581         | 632            |

4. The UHB confirms that during the COVID-19 pandemic no locum or agency staff were engaged to work in either adult psychology or IPTS.
5. The UHB confirms that IPTS have invested heavily in the training of staff to support those who present with trauma symptoms, the service aim which was in place prior to the pandemic has proven especially beneficial to patients impacted directly by COVID-19.

Within the past twenty four (24) months, the UHB has trained twenty two (22) practitioners in the delivery of Narrative Exposure Therapy (NET); supported our trained Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT) staff to offer Prolonged Exposure training specific to trauma; and currently has three (3) staff members undertaking training in Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR), which is specifically used for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) symptoms.

Additionally, the UHB has eleven (11) Accredited Cognitive Behavioural Therapists who are trained to deliver specific trauma focused Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) across the UHB localities.