

Reference:	FOI.3563.20
Subject:	Mental health referral times and waiting lists
Date of Request:	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.