

Dear

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION – PERINATAL MENTAL HEALTH WAITING TIMES

I write in response to your request for information in relation to perinatal mental health waiting times in NHS Lothian.

Question:

1. Please provide waiting-time data for perinatal mental health assessments and treatment (psychology/psychiatry) for women referred from maternity services, broken down by year and by board, for the last 5 years.

Answer:

The median wait time for all referrals to the Perinatal Mental Health Service, from referral to assessment / treatment has been 1 week in each of the last five years.

Question:

2. Any screening tools or thresholds used in maternity services to identify post-natal PTSD, PND or severe anxiety, plus numbers screened and numbers referred.

Answer:

At initial assessment we use a generic screening tool for mood and anxiety (CORE-10). Assessment is carried out by mental health professionals who will screen via clinical interview for difficulties with post-natal depression (PND), anxiety and post-natal PTSD. If further measures are clinically indicated these screening tools would be used, for example to further assess difficulties or measure change. However, we do not use screening tools routinely for these individual disorders. Building a therapeutic alliance is important during assessment and often an individual clinical assessment is more helpful at this stage than measurement tools. Use of further tools and measures would be based on clinical judgement and symptoms reported.

Information on the number of patients screened is not collected centrally. Information may be held in individual patient records, but in order to provide the information you request it would be necessary to review each patient record over the period you have specified, requiring significant resources. Under section 12 of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002, NHS Lothian is not required to respond to your request if the resources required to do so equate to more than £600 in cost.

Question:

3. Any internal audits, surveys or staff-side reports on “birth trauma” and its psychological impact, including references to staffing levels, “compassion fatigue” or burnout

Answer:

There have been no formal investigations in NHS Lothian on these areas.

I hope the information provided helps with your request.

If you are unhappy with our response to your request, you do have the right to request us to review it. Your request should be made within 40 working days of receipt of this letter, and we will reply within 20 working days of receipt. If our decision is unchanged following a review and you remain dissatisfied with this, you then have the right to make a formal complaint to the Scottish Information Commissioner within 6 months of receipt of our review response. You can do this by using the Scottish Information Commissioner’s Office online appeals service at <https://www.foi.scot/appeal>. If you remain dissatisfied with the Commissioner’s response you then have the option to appeal to the Court of Session on a point of law.

If you require a review of our decision to be carried out, please write to the reviewer at the address at the top of this letter. The review will be undertaken by a Reviewer who was not involved in the original decision-making process.

FOI responses (subject to redaction of personal information) may appear on NHS Lothian’s Freedom of Information website at: <https://org.nhslothian.scot/FOI>

Yours sincerely

ALISON MACDONALD
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Cc: Chief Executive