Lothian NHS Board

NHS Lothian Headquarters
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Date 20 October 2026
Your Ref
Our Ref 11956

Enquiries to Richard Mutch
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Dear

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION – ART THERAPY

I write in response to your request for information in relation to Art Therapy.

Question:

1. **the whole time equivalent number of art therapists employed by NHS Lothian by their grade**

Answer:

Head of Service	Whole service - 8b WTE 0.8			
Innovation & Research Lead	Whole service - 8a WTE 0.6			
Band	**8a**	**7**	**6**	**Trainee**
Community	0.6	2.0	1.1	0.8
Inpatient	0.7	3.0	3.0	2.0
CAMHS T3	0.8	1.0	4.0	0.4
CAMHS T4 / Specialist	0.6	0.9	0.4	0.4

Question:

2. **The average total caseload of an individual Arts psychotherapist at any one time (by grade if possible or as an average: please state which)**

Answer:

Community	6 – 8 per clinician (part-time)
Inpatient	open access: patient self-refer or are referred by ward team (no case load and no waiting list)
CAMHS T3	choice, partnership & specific – 12 per clinician (full time)
CAMHS T4 & Specialist	6 per clinician (part time)

Question:

3. **The average individual face to face client interactions in a week**

Answer:

Community	20
Inpatient	14
CAMHS T3	choice, partnership & specific – 75
CAMHS T4 & Specialist	18

Question:

4. **The number of face to face group sessions (2 or more people) in a week (not counting family members etc attending in a support role)**

Answer:

Community	10
Inpatient	12
CAMHS T3	0
CAMHS T4	1 or 2

Question:

5. **If possible, an estimation of the % of a therapist's time taken up by 3) and 4) combined (ie the % of face to face contact time as opposed to other administrative tasks including report) writing)**

Answer:



Additionally we have enclosed the Arts Psychotherapies Service Impact Report 2025, showing we provide around **9,000 patient contacts a year**, with a whole time equivalent staffing of 20 (c. 40 mostly part time staff). These contacts are a mixture of group and individual depending on what is most suited to clinical need.

We are sub-divided into **four teams** (Community, Inpatient, CAMHS Tier and CAMHS Tier 4 & Specialist Services) and we work across the age span. We are a pan Lothian single system Service currently hosted by the NHS Lothian REAS Directorate.

Our data does not differentiate between modalities as our vacancies are open to art, music or dramatherapy applications.
Additional information can be found on our website:
https://services.nhslothian.scot/artspsychotherapies/ and on our Ref Help pages: Mentalization Based Arts Psychotherapy Treatment (EUPD) – RefHelp
Arts Psychotherapy (Complex Emotional Needs) – RefHelp
We prioritise those who are at risk of experiencing 'Missingness' Concept Explainer: Missingness

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 www.itspublicknowledge.info/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 FOI Reviewer at the email address at the head 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/Pages/default.aspx

Yours sincerely

ALISON MACDONALD
Executive Director, Nursing
Cc: Chief Executive
Enc.



Arts Psychotherapies
towards relational health

Our Impact 2025

Arts Psychotherapies Service

Our Report Card 2025

Capacity

36 Arts Psychotherapists providing 24 whole time equivalent posts

Provision

Arts-based accessible psychological therapy using a Mentalization Based Treatment (MBT) Framework. Individual and groupwork across Adult and CAMHS secondary care Community and Inpatient Mental Health Services

Who we have seen

In year 2024/25 the team overall has provided 9,000 patient contacts, which are offered in different ways in each team (Inpatient, Community CAMHS) for people experiencing highly complex levels of mental distress

Ways we have helped

Being interested in you as a whole person	89%
Helping you to take control	89%
Making a plan of action for you	88%

reported outcome of treatment as % of completed arts psychotherapies patient feedback form 2024/25

Arts Psychotherapies Service

Our Impact from Relational Injury to Relational Health

We offer accessible arts-based psychological therapies across NHS Lothian with joint status as both Psychological Professions and clinicians under the leadership of the Allied Health Professions (AHPs). We comprise Art Psychotherapists, Music Therapists and Dramatherapists registered with the Health & Care Professions Council (HCPC).

Our patients with secondary care needs exhibit moderate to severe symptoms of mental distress, including people that attract a diagnosis of personality disorder (EUPD). They have often experienced significant adverse life events and self report difficulties in emotional-regulation, anxiety, self-harm and maintaining their sense of self and relational capacity.

In treatment we aim to encourage relational thinking and awareness for our patients, where mutually satisfying relationships with others are necessary for their ability to live safe and fulfilling lives. We provide accessible psychological interventions, which through the use of the arts form are not reliant on patients being able to find the right words for the right help. We take a psychodynamic approach to therapy within a Mentalization Based Treatment (MBT) framework that best meets the complex needs faced by our patients.

We aim for patients to find greater stability in themselves with an improved understanding of their condition and why they might be in treatment. We aim to improve their capacity to engage relationally beyond hospital and community mental health services with others that can help sustain them in the long term, including community arts-in-health programmes.

Patients said …

I feel in tune and accepted (Rehab)

Express my mind's image and what life feels like at the moment for me (Acute)

Therapist has helped me: *Be more confident with my art making and build relationships within the group* (Rehab)

I feel … definitely suggested tools that will help me on my journey to walk alongside anxiety. I cannot thank her enough (OAMH)

I am socially anxious. I feel I can come to sessions and not feel I have to talk all the time. Art making helps with this. (REHAB)

I feel that throughout our sessions … has pushed and encouraged me to reflect on situations in a different perspective which has really helped me overcome a lot of trauma I've been working on for years. I feel that these sessions of art therapy have helped me progress so much further and I feel that is down to the compassion, time, kindness and space that …
has showed from our first session

I do near enough everything differently…I am kinder to myself and mentalising to not create uncomfortable environments for others – able to explain things a lot clearer

Community Team

Since coming to Arts Psychotherapiies I do the following differently: (CAMHS)

"I understand why feelings happen and I can be more honest in talking about how I feel :)

Art Psychotherapy gave me confidence and gave me a voice (OPMH)



Cover photo Benjamin Wedemeyer

ARTS
PSYCHOTHERAPIES

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