

Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn y Gymraeg ac yn y Saesneg. We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.

Dyddiad/Date: 29th September 2020
Ein Cyf / Our Ref: 20-G-017

☎ 01639 648363
✉ FOIA.Requests@wales.nhs.uk

Corporate Services
Headquarters
1 Talbot Gateway
Baglan
Port Talbot, SA12 7BR

Dear

I refer to your Freedom of Information Act Request acknowledged by ourselves on 15th June 2020. Your request sought information relating to Mental Health Referrals.

You clarified on 15th July 2020 that you would like the information for the period 01.03.2020 to 01.07.2020.

- 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, and their diagnosis and treatment.

You clarified on 15th July 2020 that you are asking for information on all referrals to our Mental Health Services, and by "district" you are referring to the area where the patient lives.

The data below relates to the number of patients referred into local primary mental health services:

Date Range	Speciality	Neath Port Talbot	Swansea
April to June 2019	Adult Mental Illness (18-65)	452	1186
	Old Age Psychiatry (65 plus)	20	50
April to June 2020	Adult Mental Illness (18-65)	105	483



	Old Age Psychiatry (65 plus)	<5*	31
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The data below relates to the number of patients referred into secondary mental health services:

Date Range	Speciality	Neath Port Talbot	Swansea
April to June 2019	Adult Mental Illness (18-65)	691	966
	Old Age Psychiatry (65 plus)	112	275
April to June 2020	Adult Mental Illness (18-65)	187	405
	Old Age Psychiatry (65 plus)	37	181

2. Long waiting lists, for psychiatric and psychological care, diagnosis and treatment has be known for some time.

Were Covid related patients given priority? Or are they still awaiting diagnosis and treatment? If so how many age, district, sex, how long have they been waiting, and how long will they be waiting for analysis and treatment.

You clarified on 15th July 2020 that by "Covid-related patients" you are referring to patients who have developed mental health issues due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. For example anxiety of contracting the virus, or dealing with grief of the loss of a loved one.

To obtain this information would involve a manual trawl and search of patients records to review the case notes for every patient who has accessed services and cross reference this against patients given a COVID-19 diagnosis, which we have estimated would significantly exceed the 18 hours limit set down by the FOI Act as the reasonable limit. Section 12 of the FOI Act provides that we are not obliged to spend in excess of 18 hours in any sixty day period locating, retrieving and identifying information in order to deal with a request for information and therefore we are withholding this information at this time.

However, Swansea Bay Rehab and Recovery Therapies provide information and resources that includes information to support people experiencing psychological distress as a result of COVID-19 for varying reasons (see Appendix)

We also have a dedicated COVID-19 recovery page, including a downloadable therapy information pack on our website. It addresses physical and psychological wellbeing, and is freely available to everyone. You can find it on this link;

<https://sbuhb.nhs.wales/recovery-wellbeing/about-recovery-wellbeing/covid-19-recovery-therapy-information-pack>

3. Looking at psychological treatments, Betsi Cadwaladr were said to have a two year waiting list prior to Covid, and at one time Wrexham Maelor mental health services had a five year waiting list.

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



You clarified on 15th July 2020 that by a “breakdown of waiting times” you require an average waiting time of referral to first appointment for the patients mentioned in Q1.

The data below relates to the number of patients waiting at the end of each month for psychological therapies in both Swansea and Neath Port Talbot.

		Apr-20	May-20	Jun-20
Number of patients who are waiting to start a psychological therapy [end of month census snapshot]	Patients waiting up to and including 84 days (<= 11 weeks)	457	341	293
	Patients waiting 85 days and over and up to and including 126 days (12-17 weeks)	148	244	179
	Patients waiting 127 days and over and up to and including 182 days (18 - 25 weeks)	134	198	285
	Patients waiting 183 days and over and up to and including 252 days (26 - 35 weeks)	52	98	121
	Patients waiting 253 days and over and up to and including 364 days (36 - 51 weeks)	0	<5*	18
	Patients waiting 365 days and over (>= 52 weeks)	0	0	0

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?

You clarified on 9th September 2020 that you would like to know if Swansea Bay Health Board has or does employ NHS psychologists to work as private individuals as well as doing their NHS (i.e. as an agency psychologist or self-employed capacity)

You clarified on 15th July 2020 that you would like information on the amount spent on employing these individuals in the time frame specified.

Swansea Bay Health Board do not employ agency psychologists, although a small number of Psychological Therapy staff have a small Private Practice, which is declared to the Health Board. Throughout the pandemic, psychologists employed by Swansea Bay Health Board had concentrated effort on supporting local clinical services and staff across the organisation. There had been one exception where a



service area which had previously commissioned an independent psychologist, extended the contract to provide additional support to front-facing staff in the same clinical area.

5. Finally there is a general consensus amongst the various health experts... which forecasts a huge increases 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.

You clarified on 15th July 2020 that you are looking for any documentation or plan regarding dealing with mental health patients in the aftermath of the pandemic.

If a person continued to experience mental health issues as a result of the pandemic, then the advice would be to speak to their GP for a Local Primary Mental Health Support Services (LPMHSS) assessment. A referral would receive an assessment within 28 days and a first intervention in the next 28 days. If the patient was referred for a High Intensity Psychological Therapy Intervention, then the referral would be triaged in the referral meeting. Our longest waiting times are currently just over six months but this position is improving.

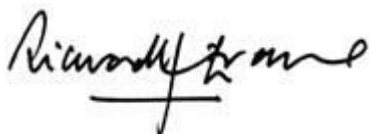
* Where fewer than 5 has been indicated we are unable to provide you with the exact number of patients as due to the low numbers, there is a potential risk of identifying individuals if this was disclosed. We are therefore withholding this detail under Section 40(2) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. This information is protected by the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018 and its disclosure would be contrary to the data protection principles and constitute as unfair and unlawful processing in regard to Articles 5, 6, and 9 of GDPR. This exemption is absolute and therefore there is no requirement to apply the public interest test.

I hope this information is helpful. If you require anything further please contact us at FOIA.Requests@wales.nhs.uk.

Under the terms of the Health Board's Freedom of Information policy, individuals seeking access to recorded information held by the Health Board are entitled to request internal review of the handling of their requests. If you would like to complain about the Health Board's handling of your request please contact me directly at the address below or register your complaint via FOIA.Requests@wales.nhs.uk.

If after Internal Review you remain dissatisfied you are also entitled to refer the matter to the information commissioner at the Information Commissioner's Office (Wales), 2nd Floor, Churchill House, Churchill Way, Cardiff, CF10 2HH. Telephone Number: 029 2067 8400.

Yours sincerely



Richard Evans
Executive Medical Director

On Behalf of

Pam Wenger
Director of Corporate Governance

