

8 August 2023

Psychodermatology Service

Questions:

Please could I make a Freedom of Information request for the following statistics?

1. As of today's date (31/07/2023), how many state hospitals in the area you cover provide a psychodermatology service on-site? Please name them.
2. As of today's date, how many patients with eczema have accessed these psychodermatology services in the last 12 months?
3. As of today's date, how many patients with eczema are on the waiting list to access these psychodermatology services?
4. As of today's date how long, on average, are patients with eczema on the waiting list to access these psychodermatology services?
5. As of today's date, what percentage of patients with eczema currently accessing these psychodermatology services have to travel outside of the county in which they live to access them?
6. As of today's date how far, on average, are patients with eczema having to travel, in miles, from their home address to access the psychodermatology service that they have been referred to?
7. As of today's date, which skin conditions (top 5) were the most commonly referred to these psychodermatology services in the last 12 months? Please rank them 1-5.

Response

There is no commissioned psychological service into adult regional dermatology services in Northern Ireland, nor is there anything specifically into Belfast Health and Social Care Trust Services.

Our Psychology service do accept some referrals from Consultant colleagues in Belfast Trust via our generic Clinical Health Psychology Service, which can be for a variety of skin conditions including eczema. This is a historical catchall small service (less than 2.0wte providing inpatient input across Belfast sites and outpatient appointments mainly for those residing in Belfast Trust areas, which are not regionally commissioned). It should have a focus on Belfast Trust only referrals, but we do historically support some regional specialisms when they have urgent or significant problems.

The Psychology service are currently transitioning to PARIS (patient information system), with some transition challenges, so the data available is until the end of May 2023 and is as follows:

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- We have had around 45 referrals from Dermatology over the last 5 years, <5 of which have been referred between June 2022 and May 2023.

Use of <5 (less than five): We are unable to provide an exact figure - exempt from release under Section 40(2) of the Freedom of Information Act, as this could make patients personally identifiable. Disclosure would constitute a breach of the principles of the General Data Protection Regulation 2018.

- Referrals have come from across the region, with the majority being from Belfast Trust or nearest link Trust - South Eastern Trust.
 - 29 - Belfast
 - 10 - South Eastern Trust
 - <5 - Northern Trust
 - <5 - Southern Trust
 - 0 - Western Trust
- Around 70% of the referrals have referenced eczema as a reason for referral.
- The waiting times for the generic Clinical Health Psychology Service are currently around 15 weeks. This can fluctuate over time, depending on staff resources.

To obtain any additional data would require more than 18 hours work.

Belfast Trust considers that the cost of retrieving the information would be above the 'Appropriate Limit', as defined by the Freedom of Information Act under Section 12. Section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act makes provision for public authorities to refuse requests for information where the cost of dealing with them would exceed the appropriate limit. The limit has been specified as £450 for public authorities such as Belfast Trust. This represents the cost of one or more persons spending 18 hours in determining whether we hold the information, locating, retrieving and extracting this information.