

Freedom of Information Act 2000 disclosure log entry

Reference

19-20389

Date sent

13 April 2020

Subject

Referrals into outpatient mental health services

Details of enquiry

Please could you answer the following questions:

1. How many referrals to outpatient adult mental health services were received in 2019 (Jan 1st to Dec 31st) inclusive compared with 2018?
2. How many of these referrals were rejected/deemed inappropriate in 2019 compared to 2018?
3. Were eligibility criteria applied to the referral in 2019? and if so, did they include:
 - The existence of a co-morbidity which excluded support from the service (e.g. substance misuse)
 - The condition was not serious enough to meet the threshold for eligibility
 - The duration of the illness was not long enough
 - No diagnosable mental health condition found, hence unsuitable for the service
 - The service lacked the capacity to support the patient
4. If eligibility criteria were applied to the referrals, did the criteria become stricter in 2019 compared to 2018
5. Were any patients rejected because the service lacked the capacity to support the patient in 2019 or in 2018?

Response sent

Thank you for your request received on 11 February 2020, as detailed in your email below which has first been considered in line with the requirements of the FOI Act 2000. I shall answer your questions below:

1. How many referrals to outpatient adult mental health services were received in 2019 (Jan 1st to Dec 31st) inclusive compared with 2018?

First it might be helpful to say that The Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust is a specialist mental health Trust which provides mainly outpatient psychotherapy services. We do not have any inpatients. Turning to your request in 2018, 1154 referrals were received in to adult mental health services. In 2019, 1340 referrals were received in to adult mental health services.

2. How many of these referrals were rejected/deemed inappropriate in 2019 compared to 2018?

Of the 2018 referrals 309 were rejected/inappropriate. Of the 2019 referrals 330 were rejected/inappropriate.

3. Were eligibility criteria applied to the referral in 2019? and if so, did they include:
 - The existence of a co-morbidity which excluded support from the service (e.g. substance misuse)
 - The condition was not serious enough to meet the threshold for eligibility
 - The duration of the illness was not long enough
 - No diagnosable mental health condition found, hence unsuitable for the service
 - The service lacked the capacity to support the patient

All our services have eligibility criteria and vary depending on the service. Most of our adult services take account of emotional and holistic need and acuity, rather than strictly psychiatric or other medicalised criteria to reduce the reasons for excluding referrals of service users. However, there can still be unavoidable reasons for being unable to accept referrals for further interventions including issues such as

- The existence of a co-morbid condition which excludes the possibility of current support from a service (e.g. substance misuse).
 - The condition not meeting the severity or complexity threshold for the service.
 - The duration of the illness being insufficient to merit the specialist intervention or inadequate trial of other treatments in other settings.
 - Lack of a significant diagnosis or formulation of a mental health condition, suggesting the referral being unsuitable for the service.
 - The service lacking the suitable intervention to support the patient.
4. If eligibility criteria were applied to the referrals, did the criteria become stricter in 2019 compared to 2018?

There were no changes to referral criteria for our adult mental health services between 2018-19.

5. Were any patients rejected because the service lacked the capacity to support the patient in 2019 or in 2018?

We had some capacity issues between 2018-2019 and have reviewed processes with our commissioners to address this issue.