

Ref: FOI/GS/ID 5835

Please reply to:
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07 January 2020

Freedom of Information Act 2000

I am writing in response to your request for information made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 in relation to A&E attendances with mental health issues.

You asked:

1. *For each financial year in the period 2014-15 to 2018-19, please provide figures for:*
 - a. *The number of adults (aged 18 and over) attending your A&E department for mental health related issues.*

Please breakdown the above figure according to:

- i.) *How many were treated/seen by a doctor within 4 hours;*
 - ii.) *How many waited longer than 4 hours to be treated.*
 - b. *For the people in (a.ii.), please provide a breakdown for how long those people were waiting by hour e.g. five hours, six hours etc.*
2. *Please detail the longest period of time an adult attending your A&E department for mental health related issues waited to be treated/seen by a doctor in*
 - a. *Each individual financial year from 2014-15 to 2018-19 inclusive;*
 - b. *2019-2020 to date.*

Trust response:

The Trust has carried out a count of patients with a diagnosis code of 35, which is psychiatric conditions. This significantly undercounts the number of patients attending as a direct result of psychiatric or mental health problems, because the diagnosis code generally represents the immediate issue being treated, so patients who have self-harmed, overdosed or come in with a less specific complaint in an attempt to access mental health help will get coded according to the laceration, poisoning or pain that gets treated first.

There is also significant overlap between the mental health / psychiatric diagnosis code and the social problem diagnosis code, since many patients being classified as social problem are also mentally unwell.

In previous years, we have been able to access more data and pick up another 2 or 3 times as many patients, but changes to the coding system and data access have made these numbers swing widely from year to year, making meaningful comparison impossible.

There is possible confusion in exactly what metric is being asked for. The question clearly asks for “time to treatment”, but wants to know 4hr pass or fail, which is the threshold for the “time in department”. This is a common confusion when it is in fact the number of patients spending more than 4 hours from arrival to being either admitted or sent home. The average time to treatment for all patients is around an hour & a quarter.

Q1

- a) See Col L
- i) See Col N
- ii) See Col O
- b) See Cols C to K

Q2 : Unfortunately we cannot give an accurate answer to this. Genuine times in department of >24 hours and time to treat of >12 hours are extremely rare, and generally have a good explanation behind them.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q
Prov_RefNo	(All)															
Diagnosis_1_A+E	35															
Count of Attendance_NTIDZ																
MonthIDZ	Under 4 hrs	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	Over 12 hrs	Grand Total		Under 4 hrs	Over 4 hrs	Psych Patients Pass Rate	All type 1 patients for comparison
2014/15	1,044	18	12	9	14	9	5	5	6	32	1,154		1,044	110	90.5%	92.0%
2015/16	1,006	34	25	37	19	13	13	15	9	64	1,235		1,006	229	81.5%	87.9%
2016/17	1,056	28	21	23	29	29	11	22	17	83	1,319		1,056	263	80.1%	85.0%
2017/18	1,443	35	21	21	22	28	15	15	17	96	1,713		1,443	270	84.2%	87.1%
2018/19	1,705	39	31	23	23	14	18	9	13	88	1,963		1,705	258	86.9%	90.0%
2019/20 to 29-Dec-19	1,387	23	28	30	13	12	20	17	10	84	1,624		1,387	237	85.4%	88.1%