

Strategic Planning and Performance Group



Sara Boyce
Via email – sara@pprproject.org

Strategic Planning and Performance Group

Gransha Park House
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Email: david.johnston@hscni.net

Our Ref: DOH 2022-0220

Date: 6th December 2022

Dear Ms Boyce,

Reference – Freedom of Information Request

Thank you for your request for information. Your request was received by email on 31st October 2022. Your request has been processed under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

I have now had an opportunity to consider your request and my response is set out below on a point by point basis and in the attached appendix.

Point 1.

You sought information in relation to, “*An updated list of individual GP practices contracted for the provision of NILES practice-based counselling, as of September 2022. Please collate this information by each Trust if possible.*”

Response.

I would direct you to appendix 1 attached in response, which contains an updated list of GP Practices providing the NILES practice-based counselling service in 2022/2023.

Point 2.

You sought information in relation to, “*An updated list of individual GP practices that had been contracted for the provision of NILES practice-based counselling as of 28 February 2022, but that no longer contract to provide this service, as of September 2022. Please collate this information by each Trust if possible.*”

Response.

I would refer you to Column F of appendix 1 attached in response, which indicates any change in provision of the NILES practice-based counselling service between 2021/2022 and 2022/2023.

Point 3.

You sought information in relation to, “*Updated performance activity data, including numbers of patients seen, demographic data, waiting times and numbers of sessions provided.*”

Response.

The Strategic Planning and Performance Group (SPPG) is only in receipt of information in respect of the number of sessions provided.

Table 1 below provides the number of sessions claimed by GP Practices in 2022/2023 as at 31st October 2022, broken down by Local Commissioning Group (LCG) area, for the NILES ‘Mild to Moderate Depression’:

Table 1.

<u>NI LES - MMD 22/23 - Sessions @ 31st October 22</u>	
<u>LCG</u>	<u>Sessions</u>
Belfast	980
South East	963
North	3521
South	1297
West	1710
<u>Total</u>	<u>8471</u>

Point 4.

You sought information in relation to, *“Details of work undertaken by the Department of Health in 2022, to map GP practice-based counselling provision against Trust led Primary Care Talking Therapy Hub counselling provision, in order to identify current geographical gaps in provision across the 5 Trusts.”*

Response.

The SPPG, in its role as the former regional Health and Social Care Board (HSCB), previously provided the following in respect of a similar question in FOI 1347 22:

“Trust led Primary Care Talking Therapy Hub counselling provision varies across Northern Ireland and there is therefore a variance in funding received for such services. For example Trusts in Belfast and Western (North West) operate a Talking Therapies Hub. In the South Eastern area it is solely the Lisburn area that has the Trust co-ordinated Wellbeing Hub. An extension to this Wellbeing Hub was temporarily funded in the North Down and Ards area and Down area for part of 2021 but this funding will cease at year end.”

I can advise that further to this previous response, the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust (SEHSCT) have advised that they been able to secure funding for 22/23 for the Wellbeing Hub (providing a service across SET Area).

Point 5.

You sought information in relation to, *“Details of plans by the Department of Health to address the geographical gaps in access to counselling across the 5 Trusts.”*

Response.

The Primary Care Directorate of the SPPG will continue to promote this service at practice level during practice visits and in the 2022/2023 GMS contract rollover letter. However, this service is one GP practices, as independent contractors, may or may not wish to contract and provide to their patients.

Point 6.

You sought information in relation to, “*Total annual spend on this NILES service for 2019-2020, 2020-2021 and 2021-2022.*”

Response.

I would direct to you to Table 2 below in response, in respect of expenditure for the NILES ‘Mild to Moderate Depression’ for the years requested:

Table 2.

<u>NI LES - MMD Expenditure</u>		
<u>2019/20</u>	<u>2020/21</u>	<u>2021/22</u>
£1,671k	£1,976k	£2,064k

If you feel that the information I have provided above does not fully meet your request, you have the right to request that the Department formally review this decision within two calendar months of the date of this letter. If you wish to do so, please write to Mr Kenneth Moore (ken.moore@hscni.net), HSCNI Southern Office, Tower Hill, Armagh BT61 9DR.

If after such an internal review you are still unhappy with the response, you have the right to appeal to the Information Commissioner at Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, CHESHIRE SK9 5AF, who will undertake an independent review.

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact me. Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

Yours sincerely,

Mr David Johnston
Information Governance Support Officer
SPPG – Western Office