

**Information Governance**

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London  
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**Email** [elft.foi@nhs.net](mailto:elft.foi@nhs.net)

**Website:** <https://www.elft.nhs.uk>

17 June 2021

**Our reference: FOI DA3794**

I am responding to your request for information received 30 April 2021. I am sorry for the delay in responding to your request. This has been treated as a request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

I am now enclosing a response which is attached to the end of this letter. Please do not hesitate to contact me on the contact details above if you have any further queries.

Yours sincerely,



Keshia Harvey  
Information Governance Manager

If you are dissatisfied with the Trust's response to your FOIA request then you should contact us and we will arrange for an internal review of this decision.

If you remain dissatisfied with the decision following our response to your complaint, you may write to the Information Commissioner for a decision under Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office  
Wycliffe House  
Water Lane  
Wilmslow  
Cheshire  
SK9 5AF

Tel: 0303 123 1113  
Web: [www.ico.org.uk](http://www.ico.org.uk)

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Chair: Mark Lam

Chief Executive: Paul Calaminus

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**Request:**

**Dear East London NHS Foundation Trust,**

I note that your home page of your website refers to a crisis in the section need help now: <https://www.elft.nhs.uk/> and when clicking on that page the sidebar uses the word emergency so that these words are in effect inter-changeable. <https://www.elft.nhs.uk/Contact-Us/Get-Help-in-an-Emergency>

After discussion, we agreed that although the public use the words crisis and emergency interchangeably, it may be of critical importance in a mental health emergency that family understand they should ring 999. You did then change the wording of your website, but you have now changed it back again so that is no longer a clear distinction to assist family members to know who to call, or indeed to identify what is an emergency.

As I understand it, an emergency is when someone's life might be in immediate danger. Please correct me if I have misunderstood.

**My questions are therefore:**

**Question 1. What is the reasoning behind this change to the wording of your website and when was the wording changed?**

Answer: The decision to change the wording was made after consulting with all the Trust's crisis lines. The number of calls has significantly increased to a point where it was increasingly difficult to resource the line. Many of the calls were not made regarding a mental health crisis (such as queries about appointment times, contact details for staff and general queries). The website was updated in June 2020 to ensure the focus was on people in mental health crisis who need urgent support.

**Question 2. Please can you explain how are families to know that your Crisis team is inappropriate for emergencies?**

Answer: The Crisis lines are the general point of contact for Service Users in crisis or their carers. However, there is nothing on that webpage suggesting that the Crisis Teams are inappropriate in an emergency. If a Service user was currently being supported by a Crisis/HTT Service then it would be appropriate for them or their family to contact them.

**Question 3. Please explain how are families to make the judgement about whether or not it is an emergency and therefore who to call?**

Answer: Service users and families are encouraged to call the crisis line if there are serious concerns about someone's mental health. The clinician will be able to discuss and if support can't be offered over the phone and it is deemed urgent, they can arrange for an assessment between 4-24 hours and a referral to HTT. The Crisis Line is the number to call to access all mental health crisis support services from ELFT in City and Hackney. If the service user or their family feel it is urgent then they should contact services and seek help and advice.

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