



East London

NHS Foundation Trust

Information Governance

Robert Dolan House

9 Alie Street

London

E1 8DE

Email elft.foi@nhs.net

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

13th August 2026

Our reference: FOI DA6544

We are responding to your request for information received 25th March 2026. We are sorry for the delay in responding to your request. This has been treated as a request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

When an organisation receives a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act, it is allowed under the Act to apply a blanket exemption to this where it has concluded that providing a response would take in excess of eighteen hours.

When the cost of compliance and extracting information would exceed eighteen hours, a cost limit of £450 can be applied. This is explained in Section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and is based on a rate of £25 per hour, regardless of the rate of pay of any individual involved in the retrieval of requested information, and equates to eighteen hours work.

Having reviewed your request, the Trust has noted that it would not be able to provide all the information requested within the eighteen hours specified in the Freedom of Information Act 2000. However, in this instance and to assist you, we have provided a partial response to your request as per below.

In order to assist you with your request, I have advised below the timing each question would take to help you to refine your request. If you wish to refine your request to comply with the eighteen hour time limit, please do get in touch.

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

Yours sincerely,

FOI Team



We promise to work together creatively to: learn
'what matters' to everyone, achieve a better quality
of life and continuously improve our services.
We care . We respect . We are inclusive

Chief Executive Officer: Lorraine Sunduza
Chair: Eileen Taylor

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

Please note that the data supplied is not allowed to be re-used and/or published without the explicit consent of East London NHS Foundation Trust. Please contact the signatory to request permission if this is your intention



We promise to work together creatively to: learn
'what matters' to everyone, achieve a better quality
of life and continuously improve our services.
We care . We respect . We are inclusive

Chief Executive Officer: Lorraine Sunduza
Chair: Eileen Taylor

Request:

Question 1: Service structure, scope and responsibility

(a) A brief description of the current service model for Tower Hamlets Talking Therapies, including whether it is directly provided, subcontracted in whole or in part, delivered jointly with any partner organisation, or supported by any third-party provider.

(b) The names of any partner organisations, subcontractors, voluntary sector delivery partners, digital platform providers, referral management providers, or other organisations involved in delivering any part of the service.

(c) Any service specification, operational policy, pathway document, mobilisation document, or equivalent current during the period.

Answer:

(a) This an NHS Talking Therapy service offering talking therapies for common mental health problems to adults who as resident or registered with a GP in Tower Hamlets, in line with the national guidelines for NHS talking therapies services: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/mental-health/adults/nhs-talking-therapies/>

(b) The service also provides an employment support service which patients can access alongside their therapy. This is funded by the Department of Work and Pensions and subcontracted to MIND in Tower Hamlets, Newham and Redbridge.

(c) Service Specification:

The NHS Talking Therapies are nationally provided in England and offer NICE recommended psychological therapies for people experiencing common mental health problems (i.e., depression and anxiety disorders) in primary care. It is a primary care service and in order to maximize access and reduce stigma, the service should accept self-referrals as well as professional referrals.

The aims of the service are to deliver the nationally defined targets for the NHS Talking Therapies service as set out in the Talking Therapies manual, and/or any locally agreed variations. In particular these include:

- At least 75% of patients to be seen for a first MDS appointment within 6 weeks of referral; and at least 95% to be seen within 18 weeks
- At least 90% of patients to be seen for a second MDS appointment within 90 days of the first
- Number of completed episodes of treatment in line with targets agreed locally each financial year (in 2024/25 the target was 4512)
- National Standards for outcomes (recovery and improvement) in line with ICB-level agreement.

Targets will be subject to annual variation in line with national and/or ICB planning. Any additional funding required to expand activity will be negotiated with the ICB.

Performance reports will be submitted monthly to the ICB detailing performance against the agreed KPIs and targets.

Quarterly contract monitoring meetings will be held between the provider and the ICB.

The THTT patient handbook includes all key aspects of the SOP and care pathways: <https://elft.pagetiger.com/thtt-welcome-booklet>



We promise to work together creatively to: learn 'what matters' to everyone, achieve a better quality of life and continuously improve our services.
We care . We respect . We are inclusive

Chief Executive Officer: Lorraine Sunduza
Chair: Eileen Taylor

Question 2: Contracts, procurement and outsourcing

For any contract, subcontract, call-off arrangement, framework award, partnership agreement, variation, extension, or memorandum of understanding relevant to Tower Hamlets Talking Therapies during the period, please provide:

- (a) The contract title.
- (b) Supplier/partner name.
- (c) Start date and end date.
- (d) Total contract value and annual value.
- (e) Procurement route used.
- (f) A copy of the contract or agreement, including service schedules and KPIs, with lawful redactions if necessary.
- (g) Any invitation to tender, specification, award report, evaluation summary, moderation record, bidder clarification log, and contract award notice.
- (h) Any contract variation notices, extension approvals, change control notices, or waivers.
- (i) Any due diligence, options appraisal, make-or-buy analysis, business case, or decision paper concerning outsourcing, insourcing, digital provision, remote therapy platforms, or partnership working.

Answer: (a) Tower Hamlets Employment Advisors service

(b) MIND THNR

(c) 1st April 2023 – 31st March 2027

(d) £1.788m TCV and £447k/annum

(e) Open procurement

(f) Please see Appendix 1

(g) The Trust has reviewed question 2(g) of your request for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOI) 2000.

Section 12(1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 states:

Section 12(1) does not oblige a public authority to comply with a request for information if the authority estimates that the cost of complying with the request would exceed the appropriate limit

The Trust has reviewed your request for information and in order to collate this information, it would be necessary to review all invitations and estimates that it would take over 18 hours to collate.

(h) The Trust has reviewed question 2(h) of your request for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOI) 2000.

Section 12(1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 states:

Section 12(1) does not oblige a public authority to comply with a request for information if the authority estimates that the cost of complying with the request would exceed the appropriate limit

The Trust has reviewed your request for information and in order to collate this information, it would be necessary to review every notice and estimates that it would take over 18 hours to collate.



We promise to work together creatively to: learn 'what matters' to everyone, achieve a better quality of life and continuously improve our services.
We care . We respect . We are inclusive

Chief Executive Officer: Lorraine Sunduza
Chair: Eileen Taylor

(i) The Trust has reviewed question 2(i) of your request for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOI) 2000.

Section 12(1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 states:

Section 12(1) does not oblige a public authority to comply with a request for information if the authority estimates that the cost of complying with the request would exceed the appropriate limit

The Trust has reviewed your request for information and in order to collate this information, it would be necessary to review every notice and estimates that it would take over 18 hours to collate.

Question 3: Budget pressures, savings and financial planning

Please provide:

(a) Annual budgets for the service for 2023/24, 2024/25, and 2025/26, including original budget, revised budget, and outturn where available.

(b) Any savings targets, cost improvement plans, recovery plans, efficiency programmes, vacancy controls, recruitment freezes, or service reduction proposals affecting the service.

(c) Any papers, briefings, board reports, committee reports, or internal presentations discussing financial pressures, affordability, productivity, staffing establishment changes, or demand-management measures affecting the service.

(d) A breakdown of spend by category for each financial year during the period, including staffing, agency/bank staff, premises, digital systems, interpretation/translation, training, subcontracted delivery, and any other major cost headings.

(e) Any records showing unplanned in-year cost pressures, overspends, mitigation actions, or requests for non-recurrent funding.

Answer: (a) 2023/24 - £5,720,229
2024/25 - £5,551,886
2025/26 - The Trust has reviewed question 3(a) of your request for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOI) 2000.

Section 43(2) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 states:

(2) Information is exempt information if its disclosure under this Act would, or would be likely to, prejudice the commercial interests of any person (including the public authority holding it).

The Trust has reviewed your question as a request for information and is applying section 43 of the FOI Act. Section 43 exemption applies to commercial interests. As this is a qualified exemption, the public interest in withholding the information should outweigh the public interest in disclosure. The Trust has applied the public interest test and in this instance believes disclosure of this information.

(b) The Trust has reviewed question 3(b) of your request for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOI) 2000.

Section 12(1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 states:

Section 12(1) does not oblige a public authority to comply with a request for information if the authority estimates that the cost of complying with the request would exceed the appropriate limit



We promise to work together creatively to: learn 'what matters' to everyone, achieve a better quality of life and continuously improve our services.
We care . We respect . We are inclusive

Chief Executive Officer: Lorraine Sunduza
Chair: Eileen Taylor

The Trust has reviewed your request for information and in order to collate this information, it would be necessary to review every proposal and estimates that it would take over 18 hours to collate.

(c) The Trust has reviewed question 3(c) of your request for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOI) 2000.

Section 12(1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 states:
Section 12(1) does not oblige a public authority to comply with a request for information if the authority estimates that the cost of complying with the request would exceed the appropriate limit

The Trust has reviewed your request for information and in order to collate this information, it would be necessary to review all service papers and estimates that it would take over 18 hours to collate.

(d) The Trust has reviewed question 3(d) of your request for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOI) 2000.

Section 12(1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 states:
Section 12(1) does not oblige a public authority to comply with a request for information if the authority estimates that the cost of complying with the request would exceed the appropriate limit

The Trust has reviewed your request for information and in order to collate this information, it would be necessary to review all cost headings and estimates that it would take over 18 hours to collate.

(e) The Trust has reviewed question 3(e) of your request for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOI) 2000.

Section 12(1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 states:
Section 12(1) does not oblige a public authority to comply with a request for information if the authority estimates that the cost of complying with the request would exceed the appropriate limit

The Trust has reviewed your request for information and in order to collate this information, it would be necessary to review all cost headings and estimates that it would take over 18 hours to collate.

Question 4: Activity, access, waiting times and performance datasets

Please provide monthly data, ideally in spreadsheet format, for the period requested, showing:

- (a) Number of referrals received.**
- (b) Number accepted, rejected, signposted elsewhere, or closed before assessment.**
- (c) Number entering treatment.**
- (d) Number completing treatment.**
- (e) Waiting times from referral to first assessment and from assessment to first treatment appointment, including averages/medians and any performance against target.**
- (f) Number and proportion of patients seen face-to-face, by telephone, by video, by digital/text-based platform, and by other modes.**
- (g) Recovery rate, reliable improvement rate, deterioration rate, and any other routinely monitored outcome measures.**
- (h) Caseload size, staffing establishment, vacancies, sickness absence, turnover, and use of agency/bank staff, by month if held.**



We promise to work together creatively to: learn
'what matters' to everyone, achieve a better quality
of life and continuously improve our services.
We care . We respect . We are inclusive

Chief Executive Officer: Lorraine Sunduza
Chair: Eileen Taylor

- (i) DNA/cancellation rates and any metrics on treatment drop-out.
- (j) Numbers on waiting lists at each month end.
- (k) Any equality or access monitoring dataset held in relation to age band, sex, ethnicity, deprivation, disability, language need, or referral source, in anonymised aggregated form only.

Answer:

- (a) This is available in national publications
<https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/nhs-talking-therapies-monthly-statistics-including-employment-advisors>
- (b) This is available in national publications
<https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/nhs-talking-therapies-monthly-statistics-including-employment-advisors>
- (c) This is available in national publications
<https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/nhs-talking-therapies-monthly-statistics-including-employment-advisors>
- (d) This is available in national publications
<https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/nhs-talking-therapies-monthly-statistics-including-employment-advisors>
- (e) This is available in national publications
<https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/nhs-talking-therapies-monthly-statistics-including-employment-advisors>
- (f) This is available in national publications
<https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/nhs-talking-therapies-monthly-statistics-including-employment-advisors>
- (g) This is available in national publications
<https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/nhs-talking-therapies-monthly-statistics-including-employment-advisors>
- (i) This is available in national publications
<https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/nhs-talking-therapies-monthly-statistics-including-employment-advisors>
- (h) Caseload sizes are in accordance with national guidelines
<https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/nhs-talking-therapies-manual-v7.1-updated.pdf>
- (j) The Trust has reviewed question 4(i) of your request for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOI) 2000.

Section 1(1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 states:

- Any person making a request for information to a public authority is entitled—*
- (a) to be informed in writing by the public authority whether it holds information of the description specified in the request, and*
 - (b) if that is the case, to have that information communicated to them.*

East London NHS Foundation Trust does not record the information requested and is therefore unable to provide a response.

- (k) This is available in national publications
<https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/nhs-talking-therapies-monthly-statistics-including-employment-advisors>

Question 5: Performance management and service concerns



We promise to work together creatively to: learn 'what matters' to everyone, achieve a better quality of life and continuously improve our services.
We care . We respect . We are inclusive

Chief Executive Officer: Lorraine Sunduza
Chair: Eileen Taylor

Please provide copies of:

(a) Monthly or quarterly performance reports, quality reports, dashboard packs, deep-dive reviews, exception reports, and remedial action plans relating to the service.

(b) Any internal audits, service reviews, quality visits, peer reviews, CQC-related preparatory reviews, or commissioner-led performance reviews concerning access, waiting times, staffing, safety, outcomes, or service sustainability.

(c) Any risk registers, board assurance framework entries, or programme risk logs referring to the service, including risks related to demand growth, waiting times, workforce shortages, digital exclusion, safeguarding, estates constraints, or contract dependency.

(d) Any escalation papers or serious concern briefings relating to missed targets, underperformance, backlog growth, inability to recruit, or provider/partner failure.

Answer:

(a) Please see nationally reported data:

<https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/nhs-talking-therapies-monthly-statistics-including-employment-advisors>

(b) The Trust has reviewed question 3(b) of your request for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOI) 2000.

Section 12(1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 states:

Section 12(1) does not oblige a public authority to comply with a request for information if the authority estimates that the cost of complying with the request would exceed the appropriate limit

The Trust has reviewed your request for information and in order to collate this information, it would be necessary to go through all reviews and estimates that it would take over 18 hours to collate.

(c) The Trust has reviewed question 3(c) of your request for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOI) 2000.

Section 12(1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 states:

Section 12(1) does not oblige a public authority to comply with a request for information if the authority estimates that the cost of complying with the request would exceed the appropriate limit

The Trust has reviewed your request for information and in order to collate this information, it would be necessary to review all risk logs and estimates that it would take over 18 hours to collate.

(d) The Trust has reviewed question 4(i) of your request for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOI) 2000.

Section 1(1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 states:

*Any person making a request for information to a public authority is entitled—
(a) to be informed in writing by the public authority whether it holds information of the description specified in the request, and
(b) if that is the case, to have that information communicated to them.*

East London NHS Foundation Trust does not record the information requested and is therefore unable to provide a response.



We promise to work together creatively to: learn
'what matters' to everyone, achieve a better quality
of life and continuously improve our services.
We care . We respect . We are inclusive

Chief Executive Officer: Lorraine Sunduza
Chair: Eileen Taylor

Question 6: Meeting minutes, briefings and governance records

Please provide minutes, agendas, decision logs, and papers for meetings during the period where Tower Hamlets Talking Therapies was substantively discussed, including where relevant:

- (a) Senior leadership team meetings.
- (b) Directorate management meetings.
- (c) Contract management or commissioner-provider meetings.
- (d) Quality/performance review meetings.
- (e) Transformation or programme board meetings.
- (f) Finance or recovery meetings.
- (g) Procurement/estates/digital meetings where service changes were discussed.

Answer (a) The Trust has reviewed question 6(a) of your request for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOI) 2000.

Section 12(1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 states:

Section 12(1) does not oblige a public authority to comply with a request for information if the authority estimates that the cost of complying with the request would exceed the appropriate limit

The Trust has reviewed your request for information and in order to collate this information, it would be necessary to review all papers and estimates that it would take over 18 hours to collate.

(b) The Trust has reviewed question 6(b) of your request for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOI) 2000.

Section 12(1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 states:

Section 12(1) does not oblige a public authority to comply with a request for information if the authority estimates that the cost of complying with the request would exceed the appropriate limit

The Trust has reviewed your request for information and in order to collate this information, it would be necessary to review all papers and estimates that it would take over 18 hours to collate.

(c) The Trust has reviewed question 6(c) of your request for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOI) 2000.

Section 12(1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 states:

Section 12(1) does not oblige a public authority to comply with a request for information if the authority estimates that the cost of complying with the request would exceed the appropriate limit

The Trust has reviewed your request for information and in order to collate this information, it would be necessary to review all papers and estimates that it would take over 18 hours to collate.

(d) The Trust has reviewed question 6(d) of your request for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOI) 2000.

Section 12(1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 states:



We promise to work together creatively to: learn
'what matters' to everyone, achieve a better quality
of life and continuously improve our services.
We care . We respect . We are inclusive

Chief Executive Officer: Lorraine Sunduza
Chair: Eileen Taylor

Section 12(1) does not oblige a public authority to comply with a request for information if the authority estimates that the cost of complying with the request would exceed the appropriate limit

The Trust has reviewed your request for information and in order to collate this information, it would be necessary to review all papers and estimates that it would take over 18 hours to collate.

(e) The Trust has reviewed question 6(e) of your request for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOI) 2000.

Section 12(1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 states:
Section 12(1) does not oblige a public authority to comply with a request for information if the authority estimates that the cost of complying with the request would exceed the appropriate limit

The Trust has reviewed your request for information and in order to collate this information, it would be necessary to review all papers and estimates that it would take over 18 hours to collate.

(f) The Trust has reviewed question 6(f) of your request for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOI) 2000.

Section 12(1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 states:
Section 12(1) does not oblige a public authority to comply with a request for information if the authority estimates that the cost of complying with the request would exceed the appropriate limit

The Trust has reviewed your request for information and in order to collate this information, it would be necessary to review all papers and estimates that it would take over 18 hours to collate.

(g) The Trust has reviewed question 6(g) of your request for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOI) 2000.

Section 12(1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 states:
Section 12(1) does not oblige a public authority to comply with a request for information if the authority estimates that the cost of complying with the request would exceed the appropriate limit

The Trust has reviewed your request for information and in order to collate this information, it would be necessary to review all papers and estimates that it would take over 18 hours to collate.

Question 7: Internal correspondence and external communications

Please provide recorded communications during the period, limited to final versions and substantive correspondence rather than every routine email, concerning financial pressure, service redesign, outsourcing, waiting time deterioration, access restrictions, or delivery partner performance for Tower Hamlets Talking Therapies, including:

- (a) Emails, letters, briefing notes, and slide decks exchanged between senior managers and finance, procurement, operations, quality, HR/workforce, digital, or commissioning colleagues.**
- (b) Communications with any contractor, subcontractor, voluntary sector partner, NHS commissioner, local authority public health team, primary care network, GP federation, or other partner body about service**



We promise to work together creatively to: learn
'what matters' to everyone, achieve a better quality
of life and continuously improve our services.
We care . We respect . We are inclusive

Chief Executive Officer: Lorraine Sunduza
Chair: Eileen Taylor

capacity, pathway changes, contract performance, budget constraints, or remedial actions.

(c) Any communications packs, FAQs, stakeholder briefings, staff briefings, or scripts prepared for referrers, patients, councillors, MPs, Healthwatch, or partner organisations concerning service changes.

To keep this manageable, I am content for you to apply the following keyword/date-limited searches where needed: "budget", "savings", "cost improvement", "recovery plan", "waiting times", "backlog", "capacity", "procurement", "subcontract", "outsourcing", "variation", "digital", "triage", "access", and "Tower Hamlets Talking Therapies" or equivalent service names used internally.

Answer (a) The Trust has reviewed question 7(a) of your request for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOI) 2000.

Section 12(1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 states:

Section 12(1) does not oblige a public authority to comply with a request for information if the authority estimates that the cost of complying with the request would exceed the appropriate limit

The Trust has reviewed your request for information and in order to collate this information, it would be necessary to review all correspondence and estimates that it would take over 18 hours to collate.

(b) The Trust has reviewed question 7(b) of your request for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOI) 2000.

Section 12(1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 states:

Section 12(1) does not oblige a public authority to comply with a request for information if the authority estimates that the cost of complying with the request would exceed the appropriate limit

The Trust has reviewed your request for information and in order to collate this information, it would be necessary to review all correspondence and estimates that it would take over 18 hours to collate.

(c) The Trust has reviewed question 7(c) of your request for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOI) 2000.

Section 12(1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 states:

Section 12(1) does not oblige a public authority to comply with a request for information if the authority estimates that the cost of complying with the request would exceed the appropriate limit

The Trust has reviewed your request for information and in order to collate this information, it would be necessary to review all correspondence and estimates that it would take over 18 hours to collate.

Question 8: Policy reviews and pathway changes

Please provide:

(a) Any review of referral criteria, threshold changes, triage changes, discharge policy changes, DNA policy changes, digital-first proposals, or changes to eligibility/access routes.

(b) Any equality impact assessment, quality impact assessment, privacy impact assessment, or service user impact assessment relating to proposed or implemented changes.



We promise to work together creatively to: learn 'what matters' to everyone, achieve a better quality of life and continuously improve our services.
We care . We respect . We are inclusive

Chief Executive Officer: Lorraine Sunduza
Chair: Eileen Taylor

(c) Any consultation materials, engagement summaries, or feedback reports from service users, staff, GPs, VCS organisations, or other stakeholders about such changes.

- Answer
- (a) No such changes have been made during the period requested.
 - (b) No such changes have been made during the period requested.
 - (c) No such changes have been made during the period requested.

Question 9: Complaints, incidents and access issues

Please provide aggregated information, by month or quarter if held, on:

- (a) Number of formal complaints relating to waiting times, access, mode of delivery, language access, cancellation, discharge, or inability to obtain treatment.**
- (b) Number of incidents or concerns logged relating to capacity pressures, delayed treatment, referral handling, IT/platform failure, or communication failures.**
- (c) Any thematic review, trend analysis, or lessons-learned report arising from such complaints/incidents.**

- Answer
- (a) No recorded formal complaints related to these issues.
 - (b) No recorded incidents related to these issues.
 - (c) N/A due to points (a) and (b) above



We promise to work together creatively to: learn
'what matters' to everyone, achieve a better quality
of life and continuously improve our services.
We care . We respect . We are inclusive

Chief Executive Officer: Lorraine Sunduza
Chair: Eileen Taylor