



East London
NHS Foundation Trust
Information Governance
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30th July 2026

Our reference: FOI DA6641

We are responding to your request for information received 4th June 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.

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

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

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Chief Executive Officer: Lorraine Sunduza
Chair: Eileen Taylor

Request: I am interested in how Trusts clinically manage patients who take lithium

Question 1: I would like to request the clinical guidelines for lithium treatment the Trust uses.

Answer: The Trust follows locally agreed clinical guidelines for the prescribing and monitoring of lithium, which are aligned with national guidance (e.g. NICE guidance on bipolar disorder and medicines optimisation).
A copy of the Trust's current lithium prescribing and monitoring guideline is attached See Appendix 1

Question 2: Additionally, does the Trust have leaflets or similar which are given to patients who are prescribed lithium, or is reference made to information sources in letters or other material given to patients?

Answer: Yes, patients prescribed lithium are provided with appropriate information to support safe use. This may include Trust-approved patient information leaflets (choice & medication leaflets) and/or reference to nationally recognised resources (e.g. NHS or NICE patient information).
In addition, lithium therapy is supported by written communication such as clinic letters and patient record documentation, which may include monitoring requirements and safety advice.

Question 3: For blood lithium tests, which laboratory does ELFT use?

Answer: Blood lithium levels for Trust patients are analysed by the local laboratories in the Acute Trusts depending on the geographical location of the patient -
Homerton Hospital
Bedfordshire Hospitals
Barts Healthcare
Newham General

Question 4: Does the Trust hold the NEQAS performance for lithium tests for this laboratory?

Answer: The Trust does not routinely hold detailed NEQAS (External Quality Assessment) performance data for lithium assays conducted by the pathology provider.

Question 5: Do the lithium results show a reference range and is this range visible to a clinician on a computer screen or paper?

Answer: Yes, lithium test results include a reference range.
The reference range is visible to clinicians via the electronic results reporting system and is typically included on both screen displays and printed laboratory reports.

Question 6: Does the Trust have guidance which states that uncertainty needs to be considered in lithium result interpretation?

Answer: The Trust's clinical guidance for lithium prescribing and monitoring requires clinicians to interpret results in the context of the individual patient, including clinical status, timing of sample collection, and other relevant factors.
While measurement uncertainty may not be explicitly quantified within local guidance, clinicians are expected to apply clinical judgement in line with good clinical practice and national guidance



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