



East London
NHS Foundation Trust
Information Governance
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7th August 2026

Our reference: FOI DA6699

We are responding to your request for information received 5th July 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 conducting a narrative literature review examining pregnancy testing practices among women of reproductive age receiving inpatient psychiatric care and emergency psychiatric assessment.

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, I would be grateful if you could provide copies of any current policies, guidelines, standard operating procedures, admission protocols, or clinical pathways relating to pregnancy testing within your adult mental health services. Specifically, I would be appreciate copies of any documents that address:

Question 1: Pregnancy testing (urine or serum hCG) for women of reproductive age admitted to adult psychiatric inpatient wards.

Answer: Please find attached the Physical Healthcare Policy. There are references to pregnancy in Sections 4, 6.4 & 6.5. See attached Appendix 1.

Question 2: Pregnancy testing during emergency psychiatric assessment, psychiatric liaison, crisis resolution, or health-based places of safety.

Answer: We do not routinely test for pregnancy in our crisis teams or liaison settings unless indicated on a case by case basis. We do not have routine access to pregnancy tests in the community and would ask the required questions and give advice on this usually rather than test ourselves. For lithium we do need to exclude pregnancy. This may require the patient to do a pregnancy test or can be added to a lab request +/- from a thorough patient history (assuming capacitous). See relevant policy – Appendix 2. For women of childbearing age, potential for future pregnancies should be factored into the discussion about medication choice and safety of medication use as standard.

Question 3: Physical health admission assessment protocols that include pregnancy status or pregnancy testing.

Answer: See attached Appendix 1. There are references to pregnancy in Sections 4, 6.4 & 6.5.

Question 4: Guidance relating to pregnancy testing prior to prescribing psychotropic medications (for example, valproate, lithium, or other medications where pregnancy status may influence prescribing).

Answer: The trust has a Valproate policy that provides guidance relating to pregnancy, Please see the following links

<https://www.elft.nhs.uk/sites/default/files/2026-06/Valproate%20Policy%203.2%20.docx>

A trustwide policy around lithium “**Protocol for safe use of lithium**” which has advice around pregnancy has also been attached. See attached

<https://www.elft.nhs.uk/sites/default/files/2024-05/BLMK%20Lithium%20Shared%20Care%20Guideline%201.0.docx>
[https://www.elft.nhs.uk/sites/default/files/2024-10/protocol for the safe use of lithium 5.0.docx](https://www.elft.nhs.uk/sites/default/files/2024-10/protocol%20for%20the%20safe%20use%20of%20lithium%205.0.docx)

Question 5: Any admission checklists or clerking proformas that include documentation of pregnancy status or pregnancy testing.

Answer: For inpatients, a urine pregnancy test is conducted invariably on admission for women of reproductive age; if clinically indicated, a blood HCG test is conducted – this is covered in section 6.5 of the Physical Healthcare Policy, please see Appendix 1.



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