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Our ref: FOI 7103

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**Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust**

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Dear Vanessa,

**FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 – SECTION 8 REQUEST**

Thank you for your request for information dated 07/04/2021. Your request has been managed under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

**You requested the following information under section 8 of the Act:**

1. The number of nurses or support workers who support patients regarding their housing while they are inpatient in a mental health unit. These could be housing officers, housing support workers, special housing nurses, or similar professions that are specialised in housing support.

Please note that Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust provide mental health services across the boroughs of Bexley, Bromley and Greenwich. In all our services nurses and support workers routinely provide support by assisting patients with housing applications and accommodation related referrals.

In Bexley, we do not have specialist housing support officers within our inpatient units, however, within our Community Mental Health Team (CMHT) we have a Social Worker who specialises in providing housing advice and support both for CMHT and Inpatient services.

In Bromley all general housing applications go through inpatient administrators. They have an agreed arrangement with Bromley Housing and a paper form application for inpatients to complete rather than having to go on-line, this also helps staff to monitor the paperwork to support the progress of the housing application. We have a dedicated housing advisor, who works with inpatient administrators, ward staff and the patient to make the necessary housing assessment and who advises staff as to what is required each step of the process. Prior to Covid-19 staff had a weekly time slot of Wednesday morning when the dedicated housing advisor would attend in person to assess all patients referred for housing and/or give updates on existing housing applications. Their link with the unit is always through inpatient administrators.

In Greenwich there is an additional specialist social worker with two assistant social workers to support with specialist knowledge, as well as a housing liaising officer who attends the bed management and gets referrals.

2. The protocol for discharging homeless patients or patients who face homelessness after their discharge. Please provide a document with the discharge policy or, if there is no document, please state what the protocol is.

We do not have a specific policy document for discharging homeless patients or patients who face homelessness. We do not tend to discharge to the homeless persons unit anymore as housing do not always allocate accommodation and the patient could become street homeless for the night or return to A&E in crisis.

As part of discharge planning the teams will discuss with patients alternative options which could include seeking support from friends and families or local bed and breakfast facilities.

Home Treatment Teams mainly engage with services users who are not homeless. However, if a patient informed us that they are homeless we will provide support with a referral to the homeless person unit with any relevant documentation.

Community Mental Health Teams risk and needs assess patients who are homeless or at risk of homelessness prior to an intervention (which again could include seeking support from friends and families or local bed and breakfast facilities) to assist while housing applications are being processed. Some may be presented at the Strengths Based Forum (a local multi-agency team) if supported living is indicated. A package of care will also be considered if a patient requires support to mitigate risk of homelessness.

3. The number of nurses or support workers who support mental health patients regarding their housing while they are in the community. These could be housing officers, housing support workers, special housing nurses, or similar professions that are specialised in housing support.

All our nurses and social workers support people in the community, however, we do not have any housing specialists in the Bromley or Greenwich community teams. We have one Social Worker in Bexley who specialises in providing housing advice and support both for CMHT and Inpatient services. Our nurses and support workers routinely provide support through assisting patients with housing applications and accommodation related referrals.

If you have any queries or concerns or are dissatisfied with the service you have received in relation to your request, please do not hesitate to contact us. If you wish to request a review of the decision, you should write to the Information Governance Manager, Julie Lucas via email at [julie.lucas9@nhs.net](mailto:julie.lucas9@nhs.net) in the first instance. If you remain unsatisfied with the outcome of your review and wish to make a formal complaint, please address this to: Complaints, Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust, Pinewood House, Pinewood Place, Dartford, DA2 7WG - Email: [oxl-tr.complaints@nhs.net](mailto:oxl-tr.complaints@nhs.net)

In addition if you are not satisfied with the outcome of your complaint or review, you may apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Generally, the ICO cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted the complaints procedure provided by the Trust. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF (Telephone: 0303 123 1113 or 01625 545 745 - [www.ico.org.uk](http://www.ico.org.uk)).

Kind regards,

**Paul Bransgrove**  
**Information Governance Officer**

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