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Cardiff and Vale
University Health Board

Freedom of Information Act 2000 - Request Reference FoI/22/071

Traumatic Stress Service

Information Requested:

- 1. Confirmation of what edition of the NICE guidance is used by the Service to assess requests or referrals by Community Mental Health Clinics (e.g. Gabalfa Clinic) that patients receive assessment and treatment for PTSD by the Service.**

The service provides interventions based on the most recent version of the PTSD NICE Guidance which was published in 2018. We also follow treatment PTSD guidance published in the Matrices' Cymru Evidence Tables.

- 2. An electronic copy of that edition of the NICE guidance.**

The NICE guidelines can be found here: <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/NG116>

- 3. An explanation as to why this guidance is used.**

Evidence guidelines such as the NICE Guidelines are developed following a thorough and rigorous review process involving expert clinicians, academics, patients with lived experience and carers to provide clinicians with guidance on the most effective care and treatments for particular problems and disorders. The guidelines are based on the highest standard research available and therefore give clinicians the most reliable guidance on what care they should offer. They also help patients to identify what kinds of treatment they should expect for their particular difficulties.

- 4. Confirmation of any other eligibility criteria used to determine requests or referrals by such clinics that patients be assessed and treated by the Service.**

The service has a number of criteria. These are:

- That the individual being referred has PTSD symptoms, including reliving symptoms, to one or more and PTSD or complex PTSD is likely to be the primary problem.
- The individual likely to be able to commit to attending their appointments on a regular basis.
- The individual is aware that the therapy for PTSD will involve confronting the memories/images of the traumatic experience, they are willing to engage with this and it is likely that they would benefit from treatment.
- The individual's circumstances are sufficiently stable for them to be able to engage in trauma focused therapy





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- The individual is likely to be able to engage in and benefit from a short course of psychological therapy usually of up to 16 sessions.
- There are no significant concerns about the individual's safety that are likely to interfere with their ability to engage in therapy (e.g. continuing threats of violence from a former partner or assailant, threat of return to an environment where war or persecution is likely)
- The individuals have sufficient emotion regulation capacity and impulse control to be able to tolerate the prolonged heightened level of emotion involved in trauma focused therapy. It is generally recognised that brief trauma focused psychological therapy is not normally helpful for those with presentations suggestive of emotionally unstable personality disorder, particularly in more severe cases.
- If there a history of drug/alcohol abuse the individual's current usage under control and they are likely to be able to retain control and avoid relapse if they undertake trauma focused therapy.

5. Confirmation as to whether the Service will only accept for assessment and treatment patients who have suffered physical abuse or a life-threatening event. If "yes", what is the reason for this?

As mentioned above the service only accepts referrals for patients with PTSD symptoms resulting from events involving actual or threatened death, serious injury or sexual violence. This is consistent with the diagnostic criteria for PTSD. See also below.

6. Confirmation as to whether the Service considers that emotional abuse is insufficient to meet the threshold for PTSD (diagnostic or otherwise). If "yes", what is the reason for this?

Whilst we recognise that emotional abuse and other adverse childhood experiences can have a significant negative impact on child development and contribute heavily to a range of mental health problems, they are not recognised as a core feature of PTSD. Therefore, an individual who has experienced emotional abuse but has not experienced an event involving actual or threatened death, serious injury or sexual violence, would not be eligible for a PTSD diagnosis.

Emotional abuse is recognised to have an impact on self-esteem, self-concept and sometimes personality development and is associated with a range of disorders including depression, addiction issues, eating problems, psychosis and personality disorder. A range of interventions might help someone with problems resulting from emotional abuse.

The evidence in relation to PTSD is only for its effectiveness in addressing traumatic stress symptoms resulting from highly threatening experiences involving actual or threatened death, serious injury or sexual violence, which can have a particular impact on the brain's threat system.

Unfortunately, there is a large demand for PTSD, the Traumatic Stress Service has long waiting lists and is therefore necessary to focus its limited resources on those most likely to benefit from the interventions that it offers.

