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Our Ref      **FOI No. 41483**

27 July 2021

Dear Requester

**Information request: Full Disclosure**

Thank you for your request dated 01 July 2021, made pursuant to the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 (FOISA) for information relating to Please tell me how many calls were made to the NHS 24 mental health hub in each month of 2020, and each month of 2021 to date, of those calls, how many were (a) answered and (b) unanswered. And also how many of those calls were referred to the hub by a Police Scotland Service Advisor, through the Mental Health Pathway operational since August 2020, NHS24 has considered your request and is pleased to provide the information requested.

For your information we are including additional context as follows:

**Calling 111**

All callers to 111 hear an automated Interactive Voice Response (IVR) message before speaking to one of our trained call handlers.

The automated message asks callers to hang up and dial 999 if they are facing a life threatening emergency or to select a mental health (press 1) or physical sickness (press 2) option for a response.

Callers are also signposted to seek health information from NHS inform or to contact their GP if their GP Practice is open.

If a caller then chooses to stay on the line and has selected option 1 or 2, their call will be answered by one of our trained Call Handlers or Psychological Wellbeing Practitioner.

They ask:

- who is calling
- where they are calling from
- why they are calling

This is so we can offer safe and appropriate clinical care. All information provided is treated in accordance with our data protection policy.

Callers will then be asked a variety of questions to allow a Psychological Wellbeing Practitioner to deal with the call or if necessary, put the caller through to a health professional.

### **Mental Health Hub (MHH)**

Callers who select option 1 from the automated voice menu are routed to the MHH.

The Mental Health Hub brings together frontline staff who are Psychological Wellbeing Practitioners (PWP), Mental Health Nurses and Mental Health Senior Charge Nurses.

The NHS 24 PWP role is unique in Scotland. This skilled post offers a compassionate response and support to those are experiencing a range of mental health difficulties and distress.

PWPs are specially trained staff who are expertly supported by Mental Health Senior Charge Nurses and Mental Health Nurse Practitioners.

Our team of Psychological Wellbeing Practitioners and Mental Health Nurses individually assess callers to the Mental Health Hub 111 service. There are a number of possible outcomes, the majority of calls being resolved without the need for any onward referral.

- most calls (around sixty five per cent) are resolved within the Hub, with no immediate onward referral
- around twenty-six per cent are directed to speak to a community psychiatric nurse or doctor
- around 8 per cent are referred to our partners in 999 services or a local Emergency Department or local out of hours services
- If calls are not Mental Health related they are transferred to the 111 clinical service.

### **NHS 24 / Police Scotland Collaborative**

#### ***Background***

In March 2017, the Scottish Government published a new 10 year Mental Health Strategy, with the guiding ambition that we must prevent and treat mental health problems with the same commitment, passion and drive as we do with physical health problems.

Action 15 within the Strategy included an ambition to improve care pathways for people suffering from mental ill-health and who are in contact with Police Scotland (PS).

In August 2020, following an intensive programme of work, PS and NHS 24 began to implement this new mental health pathway. This enables callers to the 101 service to be referred into the NHS 24 Mental Health Hub (MHH) where there is no immediate medical intervention required or perceived immediate risk or threat to life.

## **Aims**

The aims of the new Mental Health Pathway are:

1. Improve and simplify the care pathway for people experiencing mental illness or distress who present to PS.
2. Where possible, and clinically acceptable, mental health professionals within NHS 24 MHH manage and support the needs of individuals without onward referral to other agencies.
3. Reduce deployment of frontline PS staff to help people experiencing mental illness or distress who present to PS.
4. Reduce the emergency demand on locality based emergency services.
5. Reduce the number of patients taken to Emergency Department (ED) via the provision of better support and access to appropriate services.

Since the Pathway's launch, 2,402 of calls have been referred by Police Scotland into NHS 24's Mental Health Hub.

## **Data provided**

The data provided below relates to calls that are presented to 111 once callers have listened to the automated IVR messages and made a selection using the key press options.

The calls in the second table showing Police Scotland calls are included in the calls to the Mental Health Hub set out in the first table below; they are not additional calls.

Calls offered to the Mental Health Hub means a caller has called 111 and selected option 1 after listening to the automated IVR message.

Calls abandoned means that the caller hung up after making a key press selection but before the call was answered, this may be after only a few seconds wait.

Calls answered are those calls where a Psychological Wellbeing Practitioner speaks to the caller in person.

Our IVR message reminds callers to use the 999 emergency number if their condition is more serious or immediately life-threatening. We also advise callers that they may be able to access support and information through NHS inform or to contact their own GP if more appropriate. Abandoned calls include those where callers have followed this advice within the IVR message and made a decision to access a more appropriate service on the basis of that additional information.

Whilst the majority of callers make a single call to 111 within a 24 hour period, we routinely receive multiple calls from the same caller on the same day. These multiple calls will be included in all of the data provided. The nature of calls to the mental health hub generates a naturally higher rate of abandonment and it is not unusual for callers to disconnect during the call, at which point a PWP will phone the caller back.

The data includes a number of public holidays, where 111 demand increases when general practice is closed. The Mental Health Hub has been operational 24/7 since July 2020.

#### Mental Health Hub

Month	Calls Answered	Calls Abandoned	Calls Offered
Jan-20	2,181	45	2,226
Feb-20	1,921	38	1,959
Mar-20	2,200	133	2,333
Apr-20*	3,458	254	3,712
May-20	3,958	400	4,358
Jun-20	4,009	518	4,527
Jul-20**	5,725	1,429	7,154
Aug-20	7,350	1,728	9,078
Sep-20	7,695	1,549	9,244
Oct-20	8,197	2,317	10,514
Nov-20	8,340	4,436	12,776
Dec-20	7,946	3,722	11,668
Jan-21	7,377	5,452	12,829
Feb-21	5,592	5,235	10,827
Mar-21	6,710	4,461	11,171
Apr-21	7,714	3,433	11,147
May-21	8,131	3,502	11,633
Jun-21	7,999	3,160	11,159

Month	Police Scotland Referrals
Aug-20	43
Sep-20	259
Oct-20	159
Nov-20	200
Dec-20	194
Jan-21	244
Feb-21	254
Mar-21	308
Apr-21	261
May-21	253
Jun-21	227

\*05/04/2020 - MH Hub open 7 nights

\*\*19/07/2021 - MH Hub open 24hrs

This is a full release of all the information you requested.

While NHS 24 believes your request has been complied with in full, under FOISA you have the right to ask NHS 24 to review this response. If you wish to do this you should make a request for review to the Chief Executive, NHS 24, Caledonia House, Cardonald Business Park, Fifty Pitches Road, Glasgow, G51 4EB quoting the relevant reference number at the top of this letter within 40 working days of receiving this letter. Your request must be in permanent form (letter, email, audio tape, etc.), and should state:

- that you are asking for a review of this decision and
- why you are unhappy with the response you have received.

NHS 24 will issue a full response to your request for review within 20 working days of receiving it.

If you remain unhappy following the outcome of the internal review, it is your right to ask for advice and assistance from the Scottish Information Commissioner, Kinburn Castle, Doubledykes Road, St. Andrews, Fife, KY16 9DS or by using the Commissioners online appeal service which can be found at: [www.itspublicknowledge.info/Appeal](http://www.itspublicknowledge.info/Appeal)

Yours faithfully