

## Freedom of Information request 486-18

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### Request

I am writing to you under the terms of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 to ask some policies and procedures around Pathological Demand Avoidance (PDA).

This condition is sometimes identified simply as “Demand Avoidance” or as “Autism Spectrum Condition with Demand Avoidance”. For the purposes of this request, I am happy for you to consider all three descriptions as the same disorder. I will refer to the condition as PDA for brevity.

1. Does NHS Borders have any specific policy regarding the diagnosis of PDA? If so, please enclose a copy of relevant policy
2. Does NHS Borders have any policy that would discourage or restrict clinicians from diagnosing conditions not currently described in ICD I DSM guidance or other similar documents? If so, please enclose a copy of the relevant policy
3. Please identify the team (or teams) that fulfil the role of the “autism team” as described in section 1.1 of the NICE guidance on Autism diagnosis in children and young people (CG128). Please give the name of the team and their main postal address. If you have multiple teams that fulfil this role please indicate how the case load is apportioned between the teams (for instance by geographical coverage or age ranges).
4. Please state the total number of clinical staff in the Autism team(s) identified in your answer to 03 above. Please include in this figure all clinicians that are contracted to provide a regular service as well as those directly employed by the trust
5. For the staff included in your answer to 04 above please list any attendances at seminars, conferences and /or training sessions about PDA in the last 5 years that you have recorded. I do not need you to identify the individuals that attended; just the number of clinical staff that attended each PDA event will be sufficient
6. Within the Autism team(s) how many clinicians are trained in using the Diagnostic Interview for Social and Communication Disorders (DISCO)
7. Does NHS Borders utilise the Diagnostic Interview for Social and Communication Disorders (DISCO assessment) within the Autism Team(s) when carrying out assessments or is it primarily the ADOS that is used
8. Please state the total number of times identified in your answer to 07 the DISCO has been used in diagnostic assessments within the Autism team(s)

### Response

1. NHS Borders do not have a specific policy regarding the diagnosis of PDA.
2. NHS Borders does not have a policy that would discourage or restrict clinicians from diagnosing conditions not currently described in ICD-10 or DSM diagnostic manuals.
3. NHS Borders Autism Team (BAT), Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service, Andrew Lang Unit, Viewfield Lane, Selkirk, TD7 4LU.

4. The BAT consists of approximately 8 professionals from different disciplines who each dedicate part of their working week to the Autism Team. They meet 3 mornings per month to undertake assessments and 1 morning per month for a BAT meeting.
5. We do not keep central records with regard to individual training or professional development sessions in connection with PDA.
6. There are 3 clinicians trained in using the Diagnostic Interview for Social and Communication Disorders (DISCO).
7. The BAT uses the ADOS or an individualised play based assessment for very young children. This is just one component of a comprehensive multiprofessional assessment which comprises a thorough general neurodevelopmental assessment, an autism-focused history, classroom observations, discussion with education staff and may also include other assessments (eg cognitive assessment, S&LT, MusicTherapy etc.)
8. NHS Borders does not collate this data in an accessible form.

If you are not satisfied with the way your request has been handled or the decision given, you may ask NHS Borders to review its actions and the decision. If you would like to request a review please apply in writing to, Freedom of Information Review, NHS Borders, Room 2EC3, Education Centre, Borders General Hospital, Melrose, TD6 9BS or [foi.enquiries@borders.scot.nhs.uk](mailto:foi.enquiries@borders.scot.nhs.uk).

The request for a review should include your name and address for correspondence, the request for information to which the request relates and the issue which you wish to be reviewed. Please state the reference number **486-18** on this request. Your request should be made within 40 working days from receipt of this letter.

If following this review, you remain dissatisfied with the outcome, you may appeal to the Scottish Information Commissioner and request an investigation of your complaint. Your request to the Scottish Information Commissioner should be in writing (or other permanent form), stating your name and an address for correspondence. You should provide the details of the request and your reasons for dissatisfaction with both the original response by NHS Borders and your reasons for dissatisfaction with the outcome of the internal review. Your application for an investigation by the Scottish Information Commissioner must be made within six months of your receipt of the response with which you are dissatisfied. The address for the Office of the Scottish Information Commissioner is, Office of the Scottish Information Commissioner, Kinburn Castle, Doubledykes Road, St Andrews, Fife.