

Reference: FOI.ICB-2627/043

Subject: Talking Therapies

I can confirm that the ICB does hold some of the information requested; please see responses below:

QUESTION	RESPONSE
<p>I am particularly interested in how NHS Talking Therapies and related psychological support services are accessed by serving military personnel, and how this interacts with wider Defence, NHS and third sector support.</p> <p>Please provide the following recorded information for your ICB footprint.</p> <p>For the purposes of this request, “serving military personnel” means currently serving UK Armed Forces personnel, including regular personnel and reservists, where this status is recorded or identifiable in the data you hold.</p> <p>Please provide information for the following periods where held:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2023/24 financial year • 2024/25 financial year • 2025/26 financial year <p>If the current ICB was created through merger or boundary change, please provide the information held for the predecessor ICBs or predecessor footprint where available.</p>	
<p>1. NHS Talking Therapies provision</p> <p>Please provide:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The name of the NHS Talking Therapies service or services commissioned for your ICB population 	<p>Please also refer to requesters template enclosed.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. BNSSG NHS Talking Therapies b. Vita Health Group c. NHS Talking Therapies service aligned with the national NHS Talking Therapies manual

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. The provider organisation or organisations delivering these services. c. What services are delivered d. Whether the service(s) accepts self-referrals. e. Whether the service accepts referrals from NHS GPs only, or from other routes such as Defence Medical Services GP practices. f. Any eligibility criteria that apply to serving Armed Forces personnel. 	<p>https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/the-improving-access-to-psychological-therapies-manual/</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> d. Yes, the service accepts self referrals e. The service accepts self referrals, referrals from GPs and a range of health professionals. Self referrers and professionals can state serving or veteran status when referring. f. This information is not held by the ICB, please contact the provider directly: enquiries@vhq.co.uk
<p>2. Access by serving Armed Forces personnel</p> <p>Please confirm whether serving military personnel can access your ICB-commissioned NHS Talking Therapies service if they are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Registered with an NHS GP in your ICB area. b. Temporarily posted or resident in your ICB area. c. A reservist registered with an NHS GP in your ICB area. d. Under Defence Medical Services primary care rather than NHS primary care. <p>If any of these groups are excluded, redirected or subject to a different access route, please provide the recorded policy, guidance or pathway document that explains this.</p>	<p>Please also refer to requesters template enclosed.</p> <p>The service is commissioned accept referrals from patients residing in Bristol, North Somerset & South Gloucestershire.</p> <p>This specific information regarding Armed Forces personnel is not held within the ICB contract documentation, please contact the provider directly for this information: enquiries@vhq.co.uk</p>

3. Activity data

For each requested year, please provide the following information where held:

- a. Total number of referrals to NHS Talking Therapies by service(s) offered if multiple are offered.
- b. Number of referrals where the person was identified as serving Armed Forces personnel.
- c. Number of serving Armed Forces personnel accepted for assessment.
- d. Number of serving Armed Forces personnel entering treatment.
- e. Number of serving Armed Forces personnel completing treatment.
- f. Average or median wait from referral to assessment.
- g. Average or median wait from referral to first treatment appointment.
- h. Recovery, reliable improvement or other outcome measures for serving Armed Forces personnel, where separately recorded.
- i. DNA/non-attendance rates for serving Armed Forces personnel, where separately recorded.

If serving military status is not recorded or cannot be separately identified, please state this clearly.

Please refer to requesters template enclosed.

<p>I am not requesting any patient-identifiable information. Aggregated data is sufficient, and I am content for small numbers to be suppressed where required.</p>	
<p>4. Recording of Armed Forces status</p> <p>Please confirm:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Whether Armed Forces status is routinely recorded in NHS Talking Therapies referrals or assessments. Whether the categories distinguish between serving personnel, reservists, veterans and family members. Whether this information is recorded in a structured data field or only in free text. Whether the ICB has any local guidance on identifying or recording Armed Forces status within mental health or talking therapy services. 	<p>Please refer to requesters template enclosed.</p>
<p>5. Dedicated pathways, protocols or agreements</p> <p>Please provide copies of, or links to, any recorded:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Referral protocols between NHS Talking Therapies and Defence Medical Services. Referral protocols between NHS Talking Therapies and Departments of Community Mental Health or other Defence mental health services. Memoranda of understanding, service level agreements or local pathway documents relating to 	<p>Please refer to requesters template enclosed.</p>

<p>serving Armed Forces personnel and psychological therapies.</p> <p>d. Commissioned arrangements with third sector or Armed Forces charities for psychological support, talking therapies, counselling, online support or related mental health provision for serving personnel.</p>	
<p>6. Online, digital and third sector psychological support</p> <p>Please provide details of any online, digital or third sector psychological support commissioned, funded or formally promoted by the ICB for people with mild to moderate anxiety, depression, stress, adjustment difficulties or related presentations.</p> <p>For each service, please provide where held:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Name of service. Provider. Whether it is available to serving Armed Forces personnel. Whether access is by self-referral, GP referral, NHS Talking Therapies referral or another route. Annual cost to the ICB, where held. Annual uptake or usage data, where held. Whether usage by serving Armed Forces personnel is separately recorded. 	<p>Please refer to requesters template enclosed.</p>

<p>7. Strategy, needs assessment and equality considerations</p> <p>Please provide copies of, or links to, any current:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Needs assessments relating to Armed Forces communities and mental health. Health inequalities assessments or equality impact assessments relating to NHS Talking Therapies access. Commissioning strategies or service reviews that discuss Armed Forces personnel, reservists, or Armed Forces families in relation to mental health, psychological therapies or early intervention. 	<p>Please refer to requesters template enclosed.</p>
<p>8. Commissioning and contract information</p> <p>Please provide:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The current contract period for NHS Talking Therapies provision. The annual contract value for NHS Talking Therapies provision, where not commercially exempt. <p>The ICB role responsible for commissioning NHS Talking Therapies. A generic team name or generic mailbox is sufficient. I am not requesting personal staff details.</p>	<p>Please refer to requesters template enclosed.</p>

The information provided in this response is accurate as of 19 May 2026 and has been approved for release by Helena Fuller, Deputy Director of Business, Strategy and Planning for NHS Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire ICB.

FOI response template: ICB early psychological support and talking therapy pathways

Template for one ICB to complete and return. Complete all relevant sheets using recorded information held by the ICB or commissioned providers.

Section	Guidance
How to use this workbook	Complete one workbook per ICB footprint. Use the yellow cells for responses. Where information is not recorded, enter “Not held” or “Not separately recorded” and add any caveat in the notes column.
Financial years requested	2023/24, 2024/25 and 2025/26. If 2025/26 is incomplete, state the reporting period covered.
Serving military personnel definition	Currently serving UK Armed Forces personnel, including regular personnel and reservists, where this status is recorded or identifiable in the data held.
Data protection and suppression	Do not include patient-identifiable information. Aggregated data is sufficient. Small numbers may be suppressed; please mark the relevant field and describe the suppression rule used.
Documents and links	Where policies, pathway documents, SLAs, MoUs, strategies or assessments are held, either provide a public link or list the attachment/evidence reference in the Evidence Log tab.
Predecessor ICBs / boundary changes	If the current ICB was created through merger or boundary change, provide information held for predecessor ICBs or predecessor footprints where available.
Completeness	Use the Completion Checklist tab before returning the workbook to indicate whether each FOI section has been addressed.

Cover and ICB details

Complete this sheet first so the response can be interpreted in relation to the ICB footprint, reporting period and data limitations.

Field	ICB response	Completion note	Evidence reference
ICB name	NHS Bristol, North Somerset & South Gloucestershire ICB	Enter current statutory ICB name	
ODS code, if used	QUY		
FOI reference number	FOI.ICB-2627/043		
Response date	22/05/2026	Use date response is issued	
Generic team / mailbox for FOI queries	bnssg.foi@nhs.net	Generic details only; no personal staff details required	
Commissioning team responsible for NHS Talking Therapies	Acute & Mental Health Contracts Team	Generic team name is sufficient	
Footprint covered	Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire	Current ICB footprint or predecessor footprint if applicable	
Boundary change / merger relevant?	Yes	Yes / No / Partial / Not applicable	
Predecessor ICBs or footprints included	Not applicable	List names or state not applicable	
Years covered	2023/24, 2024/25, 2025/26	2023/24, 2024/25, 2025/26; state partial periods	
Is serving Armed Forces status identifiable in relevant datasets?	Partial	Yes / No / Partial / Not held	
Overall data limitations	Data detailing armed forces status of patients held by the ICB is limited and majority will be held by the provider. Within the period requested, an exercise to review local KPIs for the NHS Talking Therapies contract was undertaken and therefore there is no data regarding armed services patients from part way through 2025/2026. This data is held by the provider and can be requested directly.	Briefly summarise any caveats affecting the response	

Access by serving Armed Forces personnel

Complete the access position for each specified group. Use the evidence reference column for any policy, guidance or pathway document.

Ref	Serving personnel group	Can access ICB-commissioned NHS Talking Therapies?	Usual access route	Conditions / eligibility criteria	Excluded or redirected?	Redirected to / alternative pathway	Policy / evidence reference
a	Registered with an NHS GP in the ICB area	Yes	Self referral or professional referral	<p>Inclusion Criteria</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Age 16 and above. •GP in BNSSG. •Reporting a common mental health problem as the primary problem currently impacting the individual – depression and anxiety disorders. •Patient able to safely engage with treatment in Talking Therapies •Patient ready to engage in short-term psychological therapy •Able to focus on treatment for a specific common mental health problem <p>Exclusionary Criteria</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Individual has clear plans or intent to act on suicidal ideas / requires specialist mental health services due to risk to self •Present in crisis •Patient has secondary care needs or is open to secondary mental health services •Problems not treated in NHS Talking Therapies (detailed in the NHS Talking Therapies manual) •Situational/practical problems rather than a mental health disorder •Already accessing appropriate service with another provider 	Not held	Not held	
b	Temporarily posted or resident in the ICB area	Not held					
c	Reservist registered with an NHS GP in the ICB area	Not held					
d	Under Defence Medical Services primary care rather than NHS primary care	Not held					

Activity data by financial year and service

One row per service offer and financial year. Use notes for caveats, partial-year returns, suppressed cells or where military status is not separately recorded.

Financial year	Service ID / name	Service offer if multiple	Total referrals	Serving military referrals	Accepted for assessment
2023/24	BNSSG NHS Talking Therapies		26965	387	Not held
2024/25	BNSSG NHS Talking Therapies		25145	156	Not held
2025/26	BNSSG NHS Talking Therapies		27129	41	Not held

Entering treatment	Completing treatment	Military referral share	Assessment acceptance rate	Treatment entry rate	Treatment completion rate
387	181	1.4%	Not held	Not held	46.8%
Not held	85	0.6%	Not held	Not held	
Not held	24	0.2%	Not held	Not held	

Wait to assessment metric	Wait to assessment days	Wait to first treatment metric	Wait to first treatment days	Outcome measure used
Not held	Not held	Not held	Not held	IAPT Recovery Rate
Not held	Not held	Not held	Not held	Recovery Rate
Not held	Not held	Not held	Not held	Recovery Rate

Outcome value / rate	DNA / non-attendance rate	Serving status identifiable?	Small number suppression used?	Data source / system
58.0%	Not held	Not held	Not held	Local KPI reporting
52.0%	Not held	Not held	Not held	Local KPI reporting
64.9%	Not held	Not held	Not held	Local KPI reporting

Notes / limitations
Note this data is not a complete financial year - this data is April - July 2025

Recording of Armed Forces status

Record whether and how Armed Forces status is captured in NHS Talking Therapies referrals or assessments.

Ref	Question	Response	Categories used / distinction made	Structured field, free text or both	System / field name / source	Local guidance or evidence reference
a	Whether Armed Forces status is routinely recorded in referrals or assessments	Not held				
b	Whether categories distinguish serving personnel, reservists, veterans and family members	Not held				
c	Whether information is recorded in a structured data field or free text only	Not held				
d	Whether local guidance exists on identifying or recording Armed Forces status	No				

Dedicated pathways, protocols and agreements

List recorded referral protocols, MoUs, SLAs, pathway documents or commissioned arrangements relating to serving Armed Forces personnel.

Evidence ref	Item type	Document / agreement title	Parties involved	Current status	Start date	End or review date	Applies to serving personnel?	Summary of pathway / arrangement	Link or attachment name	Notes
EV-PATH-01	Not held									<p>a.This is not within contract documentation and will need to be requested from the provider directly</p> <p>b. There are currently no referral protocols between NHS Talking Therapies in BNSSG and Community Mental Health services or Defence Mental Health services</p> <p>c. There are currently no Memoranda of understanding, service level agreements or local pathway documents relating to serving Armed Forces personnel and psychological therapies.</p> <p>d. BNSSG ICB currently does not have any commissioned arrangements with third sector providers for mental health provision for serving personnel</p>
EV-PATH-02	Not held									
EV-PATH-03	Not held									
EV-PATH-04	Not held									
EV-PATH-05	Not held									
EV-PATH-06	Not held									
EV-PATH-07	Not held									
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EV-PATH-19	Not held									
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EV-PATH-23	Not held									
EV-PATH-24	Not held									
EV-PATH-25	Not held									
EV-PATH-26	Not held									
EV-PATH-27	Not held									
EV-PATH-28	Not held									
EV-PATH-29	Not held									
EV-PATH-30	Not held									

Online, digital and third sector psychological support

List online, digital or third sector psychological support commissioned, funded or formally promoted by the ICB.

Service ID	Service name	Provider	Service type	Presentations covered	Available to serving personnel?	Access route	Annual cost 2023/24	Annual cost 2024/25	Annual cost 2025/26	Usage 2023/24	Usage 2024/25	Usage 2025/26	Serving personnel usage separately recorded?	Serving personnel usage details	Commissioned, funded or formally promoted?	Evidence link / attachment ref	Notes
DIG-01	Not held																
DIG-02	Not held																
DIG-03	Not held																
DIG-04	Not held																
DIG-05	Not held																
DIG-06	Not held																
DIG-07	Not held																
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DIG-30	Not held																

BNSG ICB currently does not have any commissioned arrangements with third sector providers for mental health provision for serving personnel.

Strategy, needs assessment and equality considerations

List current needs assessments, health inequalities assessments, EQIAs, commissioning strategies or service reviews relevant to Armed Forces communities and mental health.

Evidence ref	Document type	Document title	Date / period	Current status	Covers Armed Forces communities?	Covers serving / reservists / families?	Covers mental health, talking therapies or early intervention?	Key relevant points	Link or attachment name
EV-STRAT-01	Not held								a.BNSSG ICB does not have any needs assessment documents related to Armed Forces communities and mental health b.BNSSG ICB has not completed any health inequalities assessments for NHS Talking Therapies within the requested time period c.The ICB has not undertaken any commissioning service reviews regarding Armed Forces personnel in relation to mental health within the requested time period.
EV-STRAT-02	Not held								
EV-STRAT-03	Not held								
EV-STRAT-04	Not held								
EV-STRAT-05	Not held								
EV-STRAT-06	Not held								
EV-STRAT-07	Not held								
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EV-STRAT-26	Not held								
EV-STRAT-27	Not held								
EV-STRAT-28	Not held								
EV-STRAT-29	Not held								
EV-STRAT-30	Not held								

Commissioning and contract information

Complete the current NHS Talking Therapies contract information and responsible commissioning function. Add caveats where values are withheld or exempt.

Contract information requested	ICB response	Notes / caveats	Evidence reference
Current NHS Talking Therapies provider(s)	Vita Health Group		
Contract period start date	1st September 2019		
Contract period end date	30th August 2029		
Extension options / review date	No extension option in contract		
Annual contract value 2023/24	£10,088,269		
Annual contract value 2024/25	£11,702,856		
Annual contract value 2025/26	£12,469,157		
Commercial exemption applied to any value?		If yes, provide exemption rationale	
Commissioning role / team responsible	Acute & Mental Health Contracting	Generic team name only	
Generic mailbox / contact point	bnssg.mh.contract@nhs.net	No personal staff details requested	
Other relevant contract notes			

Evidence log and attachments register

Use this tab to cross-reference policies, pathway documents, strategies, contracts, data extracts and other documents supplied with the response.

Evidence ref	FOI section / sheet	Document or data title	Document type	Public URL or attachment file name	Date / period	Owner / team	Notes
EV-001							
EV-002							
EV-003							
EV-004							
EV-005							
EV-006							
EV-007							
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EV-050							

Completion checklist

Use this checklist before returning the workbook. Select a status for each FOI section and add comments where information is not held or only partially held. Please return the completed workbook to XXXX

FOI response section	Relevant sheet	Status	Comments / caveats
ICB details completed	01 Cover and ICB details	Complete	
NHS Talking Therapies provision	02 NHS TT provision	Part complete	Partially held
Access by serving Armed Forces personnel	03 Access scenarios	Part complete	Partially held
Activity data	04 Activity data	Part complete	Partially held
Recording of Armed Forces status	05 AF status recording	Not held	
Dedicated pathways, protocols or agreements	06 Pathways and agreements	Not held	See notes
Online, digital and third sector support	07 Digital third sector	Not held	See notes
Strategy, needs assessment and equality considerations	08 Strategy equality docs	Not held	See notes
Commissioning and contract information	09 Commissioning contract	Complete	
Evidence log / attachments listed	10 Evidence log	Not applicable	

Summary	Formula
Sections marked Complete	2
Sections marked Part complete / pending	3
Sections marked Not held / Not applicable	5

