

**NHS Lanarkshire
Psychological Services**

Local Improvement Plan

July 2021

1 INTRODUCTION

This paper provides background information on the structure and staffing of NHS Lanarkshire Psychological Services. It gives an overview of historic and current waiting times for psychological therapies, and describes Demand, Capacity, Activity, and Queues. A model is presented towards meeting demand and clearing the historic waiting list backlog. This also includes a workforce plan, outlining required recruitment and workforce development. A trajectory is presented showing projected progress towards meeting the Psychological Therapies Waiting Times Standard by 31 March 2023, taking into account expected and ongoing increases in referral rates. Finally, the paper provides the requested information on the role and reporting line for the Director of Psychological Services.

2 BACKGROUND

Lanarkshire has a population of approximately 660,000 people, and NHS Lanarkshire Psychological Services provides a comprehensive range of psychological services to adults across both community/primary care, and acute/specialist services. Psychological Services are part of NHS Lanarkshire Mental Health and Learning Disabilities directorate, hosted within the North Lanarkshire Integrated Joint Board. Psychology services to children and adolescents are provided by CAHMS.

Psychological Services comprise a number of distinct departments and services, including Psychological Therapies Teams (PTT), Older Adults, Learning Disability, Forensic, Addictions, and Clinical Health specialties. Each specialty has its own operational protocols, which describes management of referrals, waiting lists, and policies. However, these are generally consistent with each other. The largest service, by far, is the PTT, comprising of ten, locality based, teams.

2.1 Clinical Services

- Adult Psychological Therapies Teams
- Inpatient Psychology Service (MH)
- Learning Disabilities
- Older Adults
- Clinical Health Psychology
- Chronic Pain Service
- Neuropsychology
- Psychology Stroke Service
- Psychology Community Brain Injury Team
- Forensic Psychology
- Eating Disorders Services
- Addiction Psychology Service
- Digital Therapies (including cCBT)
- EVA Psychology – Gender Based Violence
- Veteran’s First Point Lanarkshire
- Perinatal & Neonatal Psychological Therapies
- NHS Lanarkshire Staff Wellbeing Psychology Service

2.2 Staffing

As of May 2021, there were 133.59wte patient focused clinical staff employed within Adult Psychological Services. This includes Clinical, Counselling, and Health psychologists; Clinical Associates in Applied Psychology; Counsellors; Mental Health Practitioners; Nurse Therapists; and CBT Therapists.

3 WAITING TIMES

Table 1 shows the waiting times for each specialty service as at 31 March 2020, and at 31 March 2021.

As at 31 March 2020, there were 1506 patients on the waiting list for psychological therapies, of which 292 had been waiting over 18 weeks – mainly from the Adult Psychological Therapies Teams (PTT), and Neuropsychology. The longest wait was 48 weeks. These tables exclude digital therapies (e.g., online CBT) for which there is effectively no waiting time.

Table 1: Waiting times as at end of March 2020

Specialty	0-6 weeks	6-12 weeks	12-15 weeks	15-18 weeks	18-22 weeks	22-26 weeks	26-52 weeks	Over 52 weeks	Total Waiting over 18 weeks	Longest wait (weeks)
Addictions	36	17	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	18
Adult Psychological Therapies	484	277	69	52	60	64	121	0	245	48
Chronic pain	7	4	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	13
Clinical Health	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Eating Disorders	10	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	23
Forensic Psychiatry	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10
Learning Disability	15	10	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	17
Neuropsychology	6	17	7	7	9	5	28	0	42	37
Older People	58	74	13	15	4	0	0	0	4	22
Adapt	7	7	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	17
V1P	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	11
Total	634	412	92	76	73	70	149	0	292	

Table 2 shows that 1535 patients were waiting to be seen as at 31 March 2021, with 409 patients waiting beyond 18 weeks, and a longest wait of 82 weeks. The longest waits remain within the PTTs, largely due to patients electing to wait for a face-to-face appointment rather than accepting a remote consultation*. There were also long waits for Neuropsychology, given that it is not practical to undertake complex neuropsychological assessments remotely.

Table 2: Waiting times as at end of March 2021

Specialty	0-6 weeks	6-12 weeks	12-15 weeks	15-18 weeks	18-22 weeks	22-26 weeks	26-52 weeks	Over 52 weeks	Total Waiting over 18 weeks	Longest wait (weeks)
Addictions	34	21	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	17
Adult Psychological Therapies	385	272	56	117	102	86	178	43	409	82
Chronic pain	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Clinical Health	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
Eating Disorders	7	2	1	0	0	1	0	1	2	61
Forensic Psychiatry	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Learning Disability	12	10	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	16
Neuropsychology	12	20	2	9	4	4	37	30	75	67
Older People	30	21	3	4	0	0	0	0	0	17
Adapt	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
V1P	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Total	507	346	63	133	106	91	215	74	486	

* Policy on refusal of a reasonable offer of digital appointment has now changed

Historic waiting times performance against the 90% RTT standard are shown in Table 3, and the latest data, for May 2021, in Table 4. Over the last quarter, performance has recovered such that 83.9% of patients commenced psychological therapies within 18 weeks of their referral. Operational policies, protocols, and referral criteria have been reviewed, and innovative approaches implemented to reduce the longest waits across all teams, particularly PTTs, and there have already been significant reductions in longest wait times. The number of patients waiting, and the number of completed waits, improved across the last 3 quarters of 2020/21. With increasing demand over the last few months, the number of patients waiting has begun to increase, despite the numbers commencing treatment also having increased.

Table 3 Historic waiting times, from Q1 2018/19 to Q4 2020/21

	2018/19 Q1	2018/19 Q2	2018/19 Q3	2018/19 Q4	2019/20 Q1	2019/20 Q2	2019/20 Q3	2019/20 Q4	2020/21 Q1	2020/21 Q2	2020/21 Q3	2020/21 Q4
PT Wait List at quarter end	1847	1886	1609	1708	1678	1784	1938	2184	2291	2216	2088	1814
Completed waits	1705	1693	1558	1467	1708	1752	1370	1772	657	1225	1470	1697
Completed waits <=18wk	1443	1426	1271	1239	1416	1526	1141	1518	590	788	1086	1292
% comp waits <=18wk	84.6%	84.2%	81.6%	84.5%	82.9%	87.1%	83.3%	85.7%	89.8%	64.3%	73.9%	76.1%

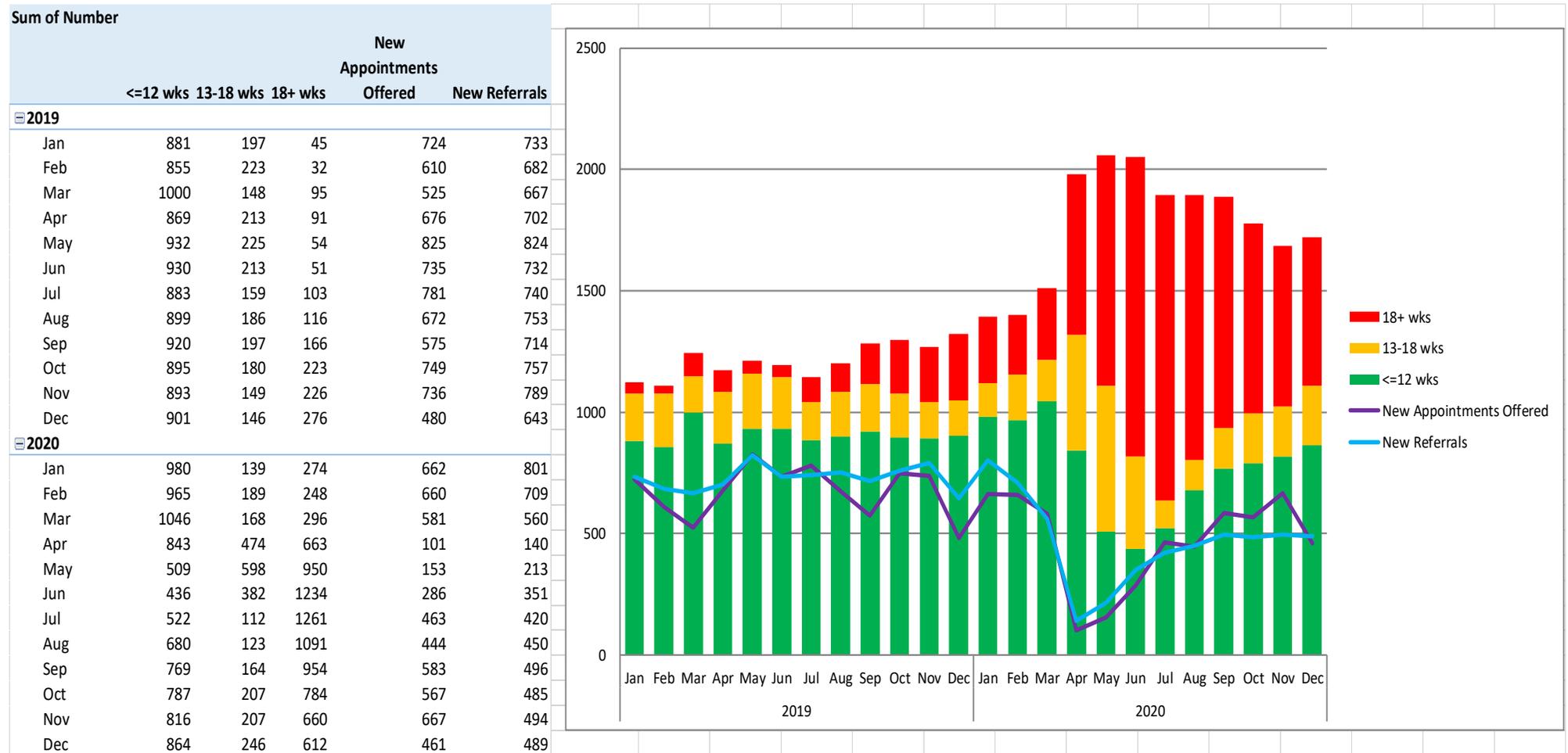
Table 4 Waiting times data for May 2021

RTT Summary	PT
No. of Patients Waiting	2119
No. of Patients Waiting <= 18 weeks	1695
% Waiting <= 18 weeks (Overall)	79.99%
No. of Completed Waits	879
No. of Completed Waits <= 18 weeks	737
% Completed Waits <= 18 Weeks	83.85%

4 DEMAND, ACTIVITY AND QUEUE FOR PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES

Figure 1 illustrates the historical activity of the service. There was an expected decrease in referrals and appointments offered in March and April 2020, due to Covid-19, and a commensurate increase in the numbers of patients waiting 18+ weeks.

Figure 1:



CAPACITY MODEL ASSUMPTIONS

Average Number of Appointments to Discharge – April 2018 to March 2021, and Average Capacity

For the period Apr 18 to Mar 21 the mean and median appointments offered and the mean and median appointments attended were calculated for those patients discharged by specialty. Table 5 illustrates this data, and the means and medians are calculated excluding patients who attended 2 or less appointments in order not to artificially lower the mean/medians due to lack of engagement.

The average number of appointments per patient offered to discharge across the entire service (i.e., irrespective of specialty) is 15. Average capacity for a 1.0wte member of staff is 6 clinical sessions per week with 3 appointments per session based on a 42 week working year.

It is clear that services differ as to the nature of their client groups, complexity, and psychological models used for assessment and treatment. This means that it is not possible to compare the number of appointments offered between such disparate services. Whilst the mean number of appointments within, for example, Neuropsychology might be 8 per patient, within Eating Disorders, it is over 3 times greater at 25 per patient. It is not feasible, then, to have a single “average number of appointments” representing all specialties and teams within a psychology service.

TABLE 5: Lanarkshire Psychological Services Number of Appointments to Discharge April 2018 to March 2021

Specialty/Locality	Appointments Offered		Appointments Attended	
	Mean	Median	Mean	Median
Addictions	15.0	8.0	11.2	6.0
Adult Psychological Therapies	17.0	12.0	13.4	10.0
Chronic pain	4.0	3.0	1.0	1.0
Clinical Health	8.0	7.0	5.7	4.0
Eating Disorders	25.0	14.0	21.3	13.0
Forensic Psychiatry	12.0	8.0	10.1	7.0
Learning Disability	20.0	13.0	17.8	11.5
Neuropsychology	8.0	7.0	5.9	5.0
Older People	11.0	8.0	9.0	6.0
PT Adapt	8.0	8.0	6.1	6.0
V1P	16.0	12.0	13.5	11.0
Psychological Therapies Service	15.0	11.0	12.5	9.0

- Contains Discharged Patients offered more than 2 appointments to avoid artificially lowering mean/median due to lack of engagement

5 WORKFORCE

The staffing complement for the service is illustrated in Table 6, showing the patient focused staffing complement as at 23rd June 2021. Of significant note are the 13.36wte clinicians on maternity leave. This is typical within the service, where over 90% of staff are female. In June 2021, the Service had 30.98wte vacancies, including 14wte new posts for which additional funding has recently been agreed based on the allocations within Ministerial letter – see below.

Table 6: Patient focused staffing complement as at May 2021

Specialty	Actual WTE	Maternity Leave
Addictions Service	8.59	0.86
Clinical Health	6.50	0.65
Eating Disorder Service	1.50	0.15
Inpatient Psychology Service	1.00	0.10
Learning Disability Service	8.62	0.86
Older People Psychology Services	12.26	1.23
Psychology Area Forensic	3.60	0.36
Psychological Therapies	2.60	0.26
Psych Therapies - Eva	2.45	0.25
Veterans 1st Point	2.00	0.20
Adult PTTs	84.48	8.45
Total	133.59	13.36

* Excludes new services, with staff waiting to be appointed.

A review of demand, capacity, and activity, identified a number of key areas within Psychological Services where existing resources were below optimum. The Service produced a business plan, with funding via the MH Recovery and Renewal Fund. Areas of need identified included:

- Inpatient Psychology Service
- Neuropsychology
- Tier 3 Eating Disorders Service
- Adult Psychological Therapies
- Learning Disabilities
- Clinical Health Psychology

Following review, it was agreed that the Service should recruit an initial 14wte additional psychologist posts towards addressing some of the gaps, and contributing towards improving waiting times for psychological therapies. Recruitment is underway, although it is recognised that psychologists must give three months notice period and, hence, there can be long delays between successful interviews, and a clinician taking up post. Similarly, whilst succession planning plays a vital role within Psychological Services in Lanarkshire, internal promotion leads to further vacancies being created at a lower seniority level, and such posts are often much harder to fill.

Whilst this additional resource will add to the workforce capacity for psychological therapies, it must also be recognised that Psychological Services continue to have very high rates of maternity leave, with little to no flexibility within the system to allow for a reduction in capacity due to this. At any one time, approximately 8-10% of the workforce is on maternity leave. To address this, the workforce plan is being reviewed to allow for a “critical floor” that will identify the demand on the service, the total capacity available, and an additional factor to take into account the high rates of ongoing maternity leave. This should allow for the flexibility needed to cope with demand at all times – acknowledging that demand continues to rise year on year.

6 TRAJECTORY MODELLING

With the assistance of analysts from PHS, trajectory models have been developed. The model used by NHS Lanarkshire is the same as that being used in a number of other Boards. In developing these trajectories, a number of assumptions have been made:

- The model is based on the assumption that all vacancies will be appointed to, and that funding will be made available towards this end. Of these additional clinical posts, it is anticipated that a number will be filled by October 2021, and the remainder by January 2022.
- The model can be amended to reflect delays in the appointment process, however this will affect either the time to achieve the referral to treatment target or the number of additional staff required to achieve target deadline of March 2023.
- It is also assumed that the current rate of maternity leave will continue at approximately the same level.
- In addition, it is assumed that there will be a 10% increase in referral rate based on 2019 monthly returns. This figure is based on the historic annual increase in referral rate of approximately 5% plus a 5% increase as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.
- It is also assumed that the majority of staff to be appointed will target the longest waits.

6.1 Trajectory Towards Meeting the Psychological Therapies Waiting Times Standard by 31st March 2023

Table 7 illustrates that with the appointment to all existing vacancies an additional 20.0wte Applied Psychology staff will be required in order to balance demand with clinical capacity, and meet the 90% target by 31 March 2023. To clear all waits beyond 18 weeks by the same date will require 23.0wte.

The model assumes that these 20.0wte clinicians will be in post and patient focused by January 2022, and predicts that 1831 patient will be on the waiting list as at March 2023, with 172 waiting over 18 weeks.

Table 7

Service/Specialty Name **Lanarkshire Psychology Service**



	May-21	Jun-21	Jul-21	Aug-21	Sep-21	Oct-21	Nov-21	Dec-21	Jan-22	Feb-22	Mar-22	Apr-22	May-22	Jun-22	Jul-22	Aug-22	Sep-22	Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23
New Appointments Offered 2019	1136	735	781	672	575	749	736	480	724	610	525	676	825	735	781	672	575	749	736	480	724	610	525
Projected Capacity		721	766	659	564	734	722	471	710	598	515	663	809	721	766	659	564	734	722	471	710	598	515
Projected Lost Capacity		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Groups		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Vacancies filled - Currently Advertised	8	0	0	0	0	33	33	33	33	33	33	33	33	33	33	33	33	33	33	33	33	33	33
Vacancies filled - To be Advertised	22.98	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	96	96	96	96	96	96	96	96	96	96	96	96	96	96	96
Additional WTE Posts Required	20	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	84	84	84	84	84	84	84	84	84	84	84	84	84	84	84
Total New Patients Seen		721	766	659	564	767	755	504	923	811	728	876	1022	934	979	872	777	947	935	684	923	811	728
New Referrals Received 2019	1353	732	740	753	714	757	789	643	733	682	667	702	824	732	740	753	714	757	789	643	733	682	667
Percentage Expected Rejection	0.0%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Patients added to WL		732	740	753	714	757	789	643	733	682	667	702	824	732	740	753	714	757	789	643	733	682	667
Anticipated %age increase Phase 1	10.0%			75	71	76	79	64	73	68	67	70	82	73									
Anticipated %age increase Phase 2	10.0%														74	75	71	76	79	64	73	68	67
Percentage Drop-out Pre-Treatment	0.0%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total for Treatment		732	740	828	785	833	868	707	806	750	734	772	906	805	814	828	785	833	868	707	806	750	734
Queue (up to 18 weeks)	1659	1659	1659	1659	1659	1659	1659	1659	1659	1659	1659	1659	1659	1659	1659	1659	1659	1659	1659	1659	1659	1659	1659
Queue (over 18 weeks)	460	471	446	615	837	902	1016	1219	1103	1042	1048	944	829	700	536	492	501	386	320	343	227	166	172
Total Queue	2119	2130	2105	2274	2496	2561	2675	2878	2762	2701	2707	2603	2488	2359	2195	2151	2160	2045	1979	2002	1886	1825	1831

SERVICE IN BALANCE -11 26 -169 -222 -65 -113 -204 117 61 -6 104 115 128 165 44 -9 115 67 -24 117 61 -6

Footnotes:

6.2 Trajectory Towards Clearing the Historic Backlog on the Waiting List by 31st March 2023

Table 8 illustrates that, with the appointment to all current vacancies, an additional 23.0wte Applied Psychology staff will be required in order to remove all waits over 18 weeks by March 2023. The model assumes that additional funding will be allocated, and staff will be in post and patient focused by December 2021.

Table 8

Service/Specialty Name	Lanarkshire Psychology Service																						
	May-21	Jun-21	Jul-21	Aug-21	Sep-21	Oct-21	Nov-21	Dec-21	Jan-22	Feb-22	Mar-22	Apr-22	May-22	Jun-22	Jul-22	Aug-22	Sep-22	Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23
New Appointments Offered 2019	1136	735	781	672	575	749	736	480	724	610	525	676	825	735	781	672	575	749	736	480	724	610	525
Projected Capacity		721	766	659	564	734	722	471	710	598	515	663	809	721	766	659	564	734	722	471	710	598	515
Projected Lost Capacity		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Groups			0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Vacancies filled - Currently Advertised	8	0	0	0	0	33	33	33	33	33	33	33	33	33	33	33	33	33	33	33	33	33	33
Vacancies filled - To be Advertised	22.98	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	96	96	96	96	96	96	96	96	96	96	96	96	96	96	96
Additional WTE Posts Required	23	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	96	96	96	96	96	96	96	96	96	96	96	96	96	96	96
Total New Patients Seen		721	766	659	564	767	755	504	935	823	740	888	1034	946	991	884	789	959	947	696	935	823	740
New Referrals Received 2019	1353	732	740	753	714	757	789	643	733	682	667	702	824	732	740	753	714	757	789	643	733	682	667
Percentage Expected Rejection	0.0%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Patients added to WL		732	740	753	714	757	789	643	733	682	667	702	824	732	740	753	714	757	789	643	733	682	667
Anticipated %age increase Phase 1	10.0%			75	71	76	79	64	73	68	67	70	82	73									
Anticipated %age increase Phase 2	10.0%														74	75	71	76	79	64	73	68	67
Percentage Drop-out Pre-Treatment	0.0%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total for Treatment		732	740	828	785	833	868	707	806	750	734	772	906	805	814	828	785	833	868	707	806	750	734
Queue (up to 18 weeks)	1659	1659	1659	1659	1659	1659	1659	1659	1659	1659	1659	1659	1659	1659	1659	1659	1659	1659	1659	1659	1659	1657	1651
Queue (over 18 weeks)	460	471	446	615	837	902	1016	1219	1091	1018	1012	896	769	628	452	396	393	266	188	199	71	0	0
Total Queue	2119	2130	2105	2274	2496	2561	2675	2878	2750	2677	2671	2555	2428	2287	2111	2055	2052	1925	1847	1858	1730	1657	1651
SERVICE IN BALANCE		-11	26	-169	-222	-65	-113	-204	129	73	6	116	127	140	177	56	3	127	79	-12	129	73	6

For both of the above models, additional staff requirement is based on wte permanent posts. Recruiting to temporary/fixed-term posts will not guarantee staff retention for the entirety of the required timescale.

7 DIRECTOR OF PSYCHOLOGY

NHS Lanarkshire has had a Director of Psychological Services in post since April 2012. The postholder has professional responsibility for all clinical, counselling, health psychologists, and Clinical Associates in Applied Psychology, and extending to CBT therapists; Mental Health Practitioners; and Counsellors. The Director of Psychological Services also has operational management and delegated budgetary responsibility for adult Psychological Services, but excluding those psychological services provided via CAMHS.

Apropos the Ministerial Letter of 5th May 2021 (MH Recovery and Renewal Fund Allocations), the Director of Psychological Services does not currently “report at Executive level directly to the NHS Board or Integrated Joint Boards”. The Director operationally reports to the General Manager for MH&LD, and professionally to the Medical Director for North Lanarkshire IJB.

Dr Gary Tanner
Director of Psychological Services
9th July 2021