



**East London**  
NHS Foundation Trust  
**Information Governance**  
Robert Dolan House  
9 Alie Street  
London  
E1 8DE

**Email** [elft.foi@nhs.net](mailto:elft.foi@nhs.net)  
**Website:** <https://www.elft.nhs.uk>

24 April 2024

**Our reference: FOI DA5314**

I am responding to your request for information received 4 April 2024. This has been treated as a request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

I am now enclosing a response which is attached to the end of this letter. Please do not hesitate to contact me on the contact details above if you have any further queries.

Yours sincerely,

Information Rights Coordinator

If you are dissatisfied with the Trust's response to your FOIA request then you should contact us and we will arrange for an internal review of this decision.

If you remain dissatisfied with the decision following our response to your complaint, you may write to the Information Commissioner for a decision under Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office  
Wycliffe House  
Water Lane  
Wilmslow  
Cheshire  
SK9 5AF

Tel: 0303 123 1113  
Web: [www.ico.org.uk](http://www.ico.org.uk)

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We promise to work together creatively to: learn  
'what matters' to everyone, achieve a better quality  
of life and continuously improve our services.  
**We care . We respect . We are inclusive**

**Interim Chief Executive Officer:** Lorraine Sunduza  
**Chair:** Eileen Taylor

**Request:** We note the report in The Daily Telegraph [5 March 2024: <https://archive.ph/xrbAk>] which reveals that NHS England has ordered hospitals to stop using physician associates (PAs) on doctors' rotas.

We also note that NHSE issued similar guidance to general practice on 27 March 2024.

In light of the increasing concerns about the use of these non-medics, we wish to ask the following questions.

**Question 1:** How many, if any, PAs are currently employed by East London Foundation Trust?

**Answer:** The Trust currently employs five Physician Associates (PAs).

**Question 2:** In which ELFT inpatient and outpatient settings are they based?

**Answer:** They are based in the following settings:

- Forensic Inpatient Services.
- Community Eating Disorders Service.
- Child and Adolescent ADHD Pathway.

**Question 3:** Has ELFT ever used PAs to substitute for psychiatrists?

**Answer:** No, the Trust has not used PAs to substitute for psychiatrists.

**Question 4:** Has ELFT ever used PAs on on-call doctor rotas?

**Answer:** No, the Trust has not used PAs on on-call doctor rotas.

**Question 5:** Has ELFT allowed PAs independently to diagnose undifferentiated patients?

**Answer:** No. PAs within the Trust are dependent practitioners, who work under the supervision of a consultant and within wider MDTs.

**Question 6:** Has ELFT allowed PAs independently to prescribe medications or order tests involving ionising radiation?

**Answer:** PAs within the Trust are not allowed to independently prescribe medications or order tests involving ionising radiation.

**Question 7:** How does ELFT ensure that any PAs identify themselves correctly to patients, making it clear they are not doctors?

**Answer:** PAs carry an ID badge and provide a formal introduction to patients stating their name and role, in line with the Faculty of Physician Associate guidance document, '*Physician associate title and introduction guidance for PAs, supervisors, employers and organisations*'.

**Question 8:** What steps has ELFT taken to prioritise the training needs of psychiatric trainees over the in-work experience offered to any PAs?

**Answer:** The training needs of psychiatric trainees over the in-work experience has not been changed. Therefore, the Trust has not taken any further steps.



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