

I am writing to make a request for all the information to which I am entitled under the Freedom of Information Act 2002. Please may you provide me with the following:

1. Does the trust use dogs for any therapeutic or medicinal purposes (eg. PAT / autism/epilepsy/ diabetes assistance) within your hospitals or for patients at home?

Yes, the Health Board arranges for therapy dog visits to take place via volunteering placements to wards and units across the Health Board.

However, they do not visit patients at home as this would not be covered under the insurance of our partner organisations Therapy Dogs Nationwide or Pets as Therapy. There are opportunities for therapy dogs to be used for therapeutic purposes as part of an individual care plan; this has happened on two occasions in the last 3 years, one to support an agoraphobic patient to go outside and the other to support an individual with mental health difficulties to engage in exercise (walking).

2. If so, are these dogs engaged as part of the NHS or through an external organisation (such as Support Dogs charity)

The Health Board use the following external charities:

- Therapy Dogs Nationwide
- Pets as Therapy

3. Please could you specify how many dogs have been engaged for each of the last ten calendar years (2012-2022), broken down by purpose. (eg. PAT / autism/epilepsy/ diabetes assistance)

The Health Board engaged the services of therapy dogs as follows:

Year	Number of Therapy Dogs
2012	0
2013	0
2014	0
2015	2
2016	2
2017	3
2018	9
2019	24
2020	24
2021	0
2022	17

Please note the service stopped in March 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic and resumed in May 2022.

4. Please list the main breeds used with the most commonly used breeds first.

Any breed can become a therapy dog if they and their owner pass the assessment by Therapy Dogs Nationwide or Pets as Therapy. The main breeds (most commonly used first):

- English Toy Terrier
- Golden retriever
- Labrador
- Cockapoo

5. How many full time members of staff (trainers, handlers, officers etc) worked with these dogs for each of the years in the same period?

One part time member of staff for one day a week (Volunteer manager role- 0.2 wte (whole time equivalent) since the service began in April 2015 with 1 day of i.e. the Volunteer Manager received approximately one day of administrative support prior to November 2020. The handlers are unpaid volunteers who own their own therapy dogs.

Year	Members of staff
2012	Prior to establishment of Therapy Dog Service
2013	Prior to establishment of Therapy Dog Service
2014	Prior to establishment of Therapy Dog Service
2015	Volunteer Manager: Addition to substantive role
2016	Volunteer Manager: Addition to substantive role
2017	Volunteer Manager: Addition to substantive role
2018	Volunteer Manager: 0.2 wte + Administrative Support: 0.2 wte
2019	Volunteer Manager: 0.2 wte + Administrative Support: 0.2 wte
2020	Volunteer Manager: 0.2 wte + Administrative Support: 0.2 wte (Administrative support ended in November 2020)
2021	Volunteer Manager: 0.2 wte
2022	Volunteer Manager: 0.2 wte

6. What was the trust’s total budget for each of these years and how much was allocated to the dog unit?

The Health Board does not have a 'dog unit'. Therapy dog volunteering is included within the overall volunteering budget.

I would like the above information to be provided to me in a table format on a searchable document or spreadsheet.