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October 2025

RE: FOI 7477

Thank you for your email of 07 October 2025 in which you requested the following information:

Having read your annual report there is very little information on your PPA [Practitioner Performance Advice] service compared to other services.

- 1. Can you give me a breakdown between NHS trusts, dentists and pharmacists that used the service in the last financial year?*
- 2. Has the service ever been audited to look at its effectiveness and what were the results?*
- 3. Has the NHSR board discussed the risk of relying on managers unilateral claims ...and if so, provide evidence.*
- 4. How many audits have the NHSR conducted about impact on therapists...and when. how many therapists were involved in such study*
- 5. Has the NHSR audited and when and what is the evidence, as to how many doctors have committed suicide or had marriage or mental breakdown after actions supported by the PPA service.*
- 6. Have they audited how many managers confirm adherence to transparency?*

Our Response

NHS Resolution's Practitioner Performance Advice service ('the Advice service') is an advisory service to support healthcare organisations to manage and resolve concerns about individual doctors, dentists and pharmacists. Practitioner Performance Advice provides expert advice, support, assessment interventions and training. You can find more information about the Advice service here: [Practitioner Performance Advice \(formerly NCAS\) - NHS Resolution](#).

We have responded to each part of your request below.

- 1. Can you give me a breakdown between NHS trusts, dentists and pharmacists that used the service in the last financial year?*

The role of the Advice service is to provide impartial advice to healthcare organisations to effectively manage and resolve concerns raised about the practice of individual doctors, dentists and pharmacists. Most enquiries we receive for our service come from employers or contracting

organisations for which the practitioner is working and about whom there are concerns. A small number (25 cases in 2024/25) are practitioners requesting advice directly.

Table 1 below shows the data we hold on the number of practitioners who have had cases opened with the Advice service during 2024/25, broken down by different profession types.

Table 1	
Profession type	No. of practitioners*
Doctor	1168
Dentist	53
Pharmacist	<5**

**Each practitioner is counted only once, even if they had multiple cases opened during this period.*

*** We have not included low numbers below five because we believe the likelihood exists that individuals who are the subject of this information may be identified either from this information alone, or in combination with other available information. In addition, as this information is considered to be confidential in nature (relating to an individual's performance at work) NHS Resolution believes it has a greater responsibility to protect those individuals' identities, as disclosure could potentially cause damage and/or distress to those involved.*

Disclosure of information with this level of granularity is exempt under Section 40(2) of the Freedom of Information Act and when section 40(3A) (a) is satisfied, where disclosure to a member of the public would contravene one or more of the data protection principles. The first data protection principle concerns fairness and lawfulness, and we take the view that it would be neither fair nor lawful to disclose more detailed information. This is in part because data subjects who use our service would not expect us to process their personal information in this way, and we do not believe there is a legal requirement for us to do so.

2. Has the service ever been audited to look at its effectiveness and what were the results?

In line with NHS Resolution's governance arrangements, an audit of the Advice service was undertaken in 2019 focusing on budgeting, performance management and compliance with Directions set by the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care. The audit concluded that the framework of governance, risk management and control was considered to be adequate and effective.

In addition, the recent independent [review of patient safety across the health and care landscape](#) considered the role of specific NHS Resolution functions, and concluded with the recommendation that it continues with its role as already established. The review focused on NHS Resolution's patient safety-related learning functions, including Practitioner Performance Advice, and noted that NHS Resolution routinely monitors its contribution (and in doing so its effectiveness) through several mechanisms which apply to the Advice service as well as other parts of NHS Resolution.

3. Has the NHSR board discussed the risk of relying on managers unilateral claims ...and if so, provide evidence.

The Board does receive reports about the function and activities of the Advice service which are set out in Directions to NHS Resolution by the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care.

It may be helpful to clarify that NHS Resolution is an advisory body and does not act for the healthcare organisation or the practitioner, based on the information provided by those who contact us. In all cases, our role is to provide impartial and expert advice which is aimed towards supporting the local management and resolution of performance concerns. We are not a decision-making or an investigative body – in all cases, any decisions about the ongoing management, employment or contractual status of the practitioner rests solely with the healthcare organisation. In making any decision about an individual's employment or practice status, the healthcare organisation may have regard to our advice alongside any other information which it considers to be relevant, including submissions from the practitioner and/or their professional representatives.

Further information about the Advice service is available here: [Advice - NHS Resolution](#), [What we can do - NHS Resolution](#) and [Information for healthcare practitioners - NHS Resolution](#).

4. How many audits have the NHSR conducted about impact on therapists...and when. how many therapists were involved in such study
5. Has the NHSR audited and when and what is the evidence, as to how many doctors have committed suicide or had marriage or mental breakdown after actions supported by the PPA service.

We have taken the above requests together. Please note that in responding, we have assumed that your reference to therapists is included in our broad categorisation of practitioners which covers doctors, dentists and pharmacists.

Whilst NHS Resolution has not undertaken any audits on the impact on practitioners, we do however produce a series of [Insight publications](#) to share analysis and research which draws on our experience of providing expert, impartial advice and interventions to healthcare organisations. This includes research to understand the lived experience of practitioners by seeking their input. Through sharing these insights, we aim to support the healthcare system to better understand, manage and resolve concerns about practitioners.

The service we offer is advisory, and as such the management and resolution of concerns remains the responsibility of the employer or contracting organisation. Our approach is underpinned by a commitment to supporting the wellbeing of practitioners in Advice cases including encouraging employers or contracting organisations to:

- notify practitioners promptly of our involvement, unless there is a compelling reason not to do so;
- provide regular updates to practitioners throughout the life of the management of a performance concern;
- encourage transparency and sharing of our correspondence with the practitioner;
- signpost practitioners to appropriate sources of support.

In addition, our [Fairness and Proportionality framework](#) provides a resource for healthcare organisations to help those managing cases to resolve cases in a way which allows fully informed decisions to be taken and which recognises and manages the impact on practitioners. The practitioner experience is a key feature throughout, particularly in the principles of ‘ensuring welfare and support’ and ‘ensuring the practitioner is heard’.

6. Have they audited how many managers confirm adherence to transparency?

As stated under point 3. we are an advisory service, and do not audit the conduct of managers at employers or contracting organisations. We encourage healthcare organisations to share our correspondence and the advice we have given with the practitioner, and to provide regular updates to practitioners throughout the life of the management of a performance concern.

This concludes our response to your request.

If you are not satisfied with the service that you have received in response to your Information request, it is open to you to make a complaint and request a formal review of our decisions. If you choose to do this, you should write to [Joanne Appleby](#), Deputy Data Protection Officer, NHS Resolution, within 28 days of your receipt of this reply. Reviews of decisions made in relation to information requests are carried out by a person who was not involved in the original decision-making about the request.

If you are not content with the outcome of your complaint, you may apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a review of the decision. Generally, the Information Commissioner will not make a decision unless you have exhausted the local complaints procedure. The address of the Information Commissioner’s Office is:

Wycliffe House

Water Lane

Wilmslow

Cheshire

SK9 5AF

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