

# An SPA re-referral Quality Improvement Project (QIP)

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## Background

Primary Liaison Recovery Service (PLRS) serves as a single point of access for all referrals to community mental health services in Sutton. The team aims to assess all referrals and either accept or signpost to appropriate services. In 2023, the service received 584 re-referrals for patients previously under the service. This reflects a significant burden on services.

## Methodology

This audit will retrospectively analyse data from all patients re-referred to Sutton PLRS between July to December 2023. Data including diagnosis, referrer source, outcome, discharge source and discharge reason will be analysed.

## Results

We identified 288 re-referrals between July and December 2023. The most prominent month of re-referrals was shared by both July and October at 23% each.

Patients aged 26-35 and 45-55 years old were the age categories with the highest referrals back into our service, at 22%. When analysing the impact of gender on re-referrals, this was shown to have minimal impact. 51% of the referrals were female and 49% male.

Re-referral time varied. Most re-referrals were in the first 5 months, accounting for 73% of all re-referrals. The largest number of re-referrals were made after 1 month, this accounted for 16% of total referrals made back into the service.

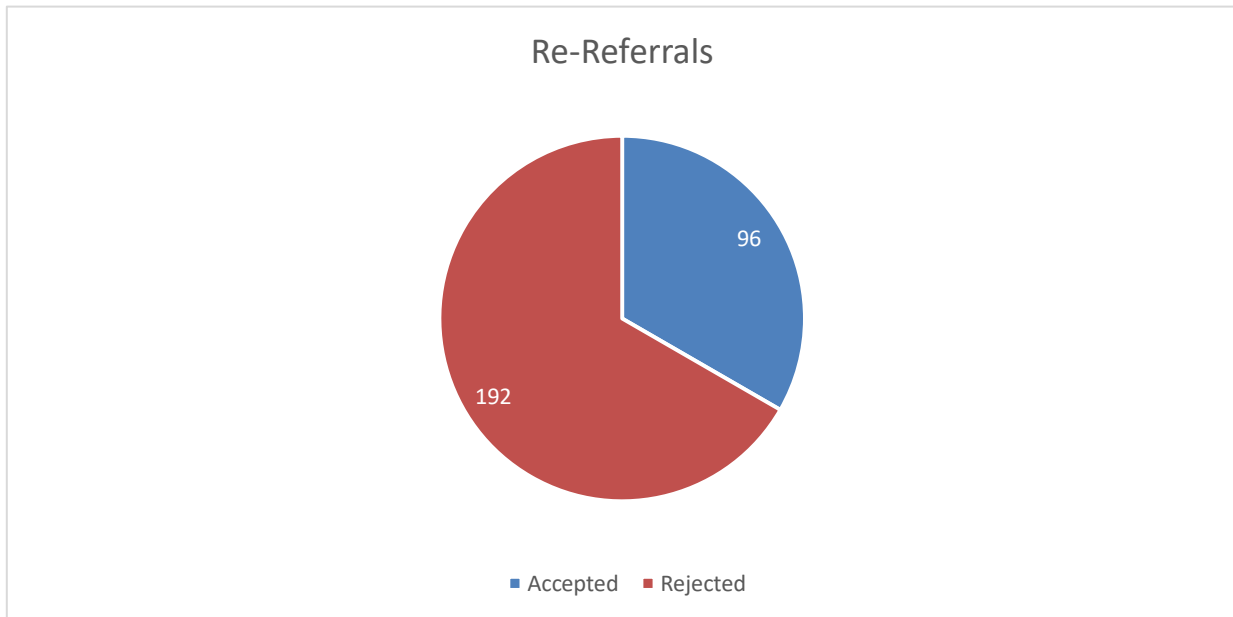
Reasons for discharge from Sutton PLRS varied however collectively the largest reasons for

initial discharge was 'did not engage/opt-in' and 'inappropriate referral' which accounted for 32% and 30% respectively. Sutton Single Point of Access (SPA) was responsible for the largest number of discharges at 77%. The most common reason for client referral back into services was due to symptoms of their mental health, accounting for 36% of the total referrals. It was highlighted that 5% of patients had an unclear reason for re-referral. GP and police safeguarding referrals (MERLIN) were the source of our highest referrals, equating to 32% and 30% of re-referrals. Out of all re-referrals, 33% (96 clients) were accepted. 53 clients were declined. They were declined due to; already under the appropriate team (4%) or inappropriate referral (15%) as percentages of the whole cohort.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, only 33% of referrals were accepted into the team, reflecting a significant proportion of inappropriate referrals to an already under-pressure service. A large source of the referrals was from the GP. An intervention to combat this will be to educate and encourage GPs to use advice and guidance pathways, for example allowing GPs to email and gain advice without making a formal referral or the utilisation of primary care wellbeing practitioners in the community, both of which could be set up in the future.

**Figure 1. Number of referrals accepted or rejected to the Sutton Primary Liaison Recovery Service**



### References

South West London and St George's Mental Health NHS Trust Community Transformation Guidance, 2023.

### About the authors

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