

11 January 2023

Autism Services for Children

I am writing to you under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to request the following information from Belfast Health & Social Care Trust. In relation to ASD services specifically, please provide:

Current average wait time from referral to diagnosis of ASD

Belfast Trust do not record this data and it would require in excess of 18 hours work to try to provide an answer.

The Trust considers that the cost of retrieving the information would be above the 'Appropriate Limit', as defined by the Freedom of Information Act under Section 12. Section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act makes provision for public authorities to refuse requests for information where the cost of dealing with them would exceed the appropriate limit. The limit has been specified as £450 for public authorities such as Belfast Trust. This represents the cost of one or more persons spending 18 hours in determining whether we hold the information, locating, retrieving and extracting this information.

We can however provide you with the following:

For Q1 we would need to know which children got a positive diagnosis of ASD, date referred and when feedback was received. We can't do this without a manual count. We are not asked to capture this info routinely. What we can do is provide, as per below, the standard waiting time report for commencing assessment – this is what we are asked to report on routinely and may be a helpful proxy for you.

Month Ending:	0-4 Weeks (0-28 days)	>4 to 8 Weeks (29-56 days)	>8 to 13 weeks (57-91 days)	> 13 to 18 weeks (92-126 days)	> 18 to 26 weeks (127-182 days)	> 26 to 39 weeks (183-273 days)	> 39 to 52 weeks (274-364 days)	> 52 weeks (365+ days)	Total Waiters	Longest Wait (in Days)	Reason for Breach (if applicable)

11 January 2023

Apr-22	96	93	119	80	178	221	264	1240	2291	1606	Currently, demand is greater than capacity.
May-22	136	80	116	129	130	261	236	1299	2387	1175	Currently, demand is greater than capacity.
Jun-22	146	122	98	119	155	259	221	1351	2471	1205	Currently, demand is greater than capacity.
Jul-22	92	134	129	103	185	245	215	1398	2501	1175	Currently, demand is greater than capacity.
Aug-22	107	98	143	140	167	246	258	1392	2551	1206	Currently, demand is greater than capacity.
Sep-22	105	91	122	139	194	267	250	1450	2618	1236	Currently, demand is greater than capacity.
Oct-22	120	90	110	124	220	280	236	1504	2684	1244	Currently, demand is greater than capacity.
Nov-22	90	210	107	122	220	277	234	1480	2740	1231	Currently, demand is greater than capacity.

Current average time period from initial consultation to diagnosis of ASD

We do not collect this information but, for the vast majority of cases, we estimate a maximum of 12 weeks to complete an assessment (including seeking information from 3rd party in line with NICE guidelines).

11 January 2023

Average age of child at referral

Please find below data, which provides ages of referrals accepted for 2021/2022:

Month Ending:	Apr-21	May-21	Jun-21	Jul-21	Aug-21	Sep-21	Oct-21	Nov-21	Dec-21	Jan-22	Feb-22	Mar-22	TOTAL
Diagnostic Referrals (Accepted) by Age and Gender													
MALES													
<2 years	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2-<3 years	0	3	4	2	5	10	9	10	3	3	5	10	64
3-<4 years	7	10	11	9	5	10	13	20	10	12	13	22	142
4-<5 years	3	8	11	10	1	8	8	10	3	11	8	6	87
5-11 years	11	22	32	24	22	27	23	22	15	17	21	25	261
12-14 years	2	4	5	5	3	2	5	4	2	2	3	3	40
15-17 years	1	2	8	1	0	3	2	3	2	2	4	5	33
18+ years	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL MALES	24	49	71	51	36	60	60	69	35	47	54	71	627
FEMALES													
<2 years	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2-<3 years	0	1	3	1	2	3	2	3	1	2	0	3	21
3-<4 years	2	1	3	12	5	6	4	5	6	4	5	6	59
4-<5 years	1	4	6	6	4	2	0	6	0	3	5	3	40
5-11 years	10	10	10	15	6	12	15	10	7	11	13	14	133
12-14 years	5	3	5	7	3	11	8	12	8	3	8	7	80
15-17 years	3	2	0	5	5	5	4	8	3	7	12	4	58
18+ years	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL FEMALES	21	21	27	46	25	39	33	44	25	30	43	37	391
TOTAL ALL GENDERS	45	70	98	97	61	99	93	113	60	77	97	108	1018

11 January 2023

Average age of child at diagnosis

Please find below data, which provides ages of positive ASD diagnosis in 2021/2022:

Month Ending:	Apr-21	May-21	Jun-21	Jul-21	Aug-21	Sep-21	Oct-21	Nov-21	Dec-21	Jan-22	Feb-22	Mar-22	TOTAL
Children given Positive ASD Diagnosis (in Month) by Age and Gender													
MALES													
<2 years	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2-<3 years	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	2
3-<4 years	0	0	0	1	3	0	1	2	1	2	1	1	12
4-<5 years	4	0	1	5	2	1	4	3	2	6	3	4	35
5-11 years	5	11	4	10	14	19	12	12	14	4	19	14	138
12-14 years	2	7	0	5	4	6	1	3	1	1	2	3	35
15-17 years	0	4	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	4	2	16
18+ years	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
TOTAL MALES	13	22	6	21	24	27	19	21	19	14	30	24	240
FEMALES													
<2 years	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2-<3 years	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
3-<4 years	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	5
4-<5 years	0	0	1	3	1	0	1	2	1	2	2	0	13
5-11 years	4	3	1	5	2	11	4	5	6	4	3	2	50
12-14 years	0	1	3	2	1	4	0	1	1	2	0	1	16
15-17 years	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	5
18+ years	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	4
TOTAL FEMALES	5	6	6	10	6	15	7	8	9	11	7	4	94
TOTAL ALL GENDERS	18	28	12	31	30	42	26	29	28	25	37	28	334

How many children are currently on the waiting list for initial consultation?

There are 2618 children and young people awaiting ASD assessment at September 2022.

How many children are currently awaiting a diagnosis?

It is impossible to know how many of the 2618 children and young people on the waiting list for ASD assessment will receive a positive ASD diagnosis until the ASD assessment is complete.

11 January 2023

What services does the Trust provide at point of referral?

Accessed via [Child and Adolescent Autism Service | Belfast Health & Social Care Trust \(hscni.net\)](https://hscni.net). The Child and Adolescent Autism Service (CAAS) has developed **an interactive online resource that includes advice, helpful strategies and training webinars**.

We have also developed a **Directory of Services**, which includes information and contact details for other organisations that can provide help and support.

What services does the Trust provide at the point of diagnosis?

As soon as a referral is received for intervention, parents get immediate access to our ‘First Steps’ webinars, which provide foundation knowledge on autism along with advice and strategies. A Directory of Services is also provided. Parents are then invited to attend a face-to-face session, along with other parents, to get to know the service and discuss their child or young person’s needs.

Statistics relating to those referring for consultation, i.e. GP, Health Visitor, School, Parent, Other

Month Ending:	Apr-21	May-21	Jun-21	Jul-21	Aug-21	Sep-21	Oct-21	Nov-21	Dec-21	Jan-22	Feb-22	Mar-22	TOTAL
Source of Diagnostic Referrals (Accepted)													
CAMHS	12	7	9	9	8	12	12	10	9	8	9	7	112
Core AHP Services	2	6	9	11	5	16	14	16	8	9	10	17	123
Core Paediatrics	7	12	17	15	12	21	21	13	7	8	8	18	159
Education	4	2	6	4	3	3	1	4	5	5	6	9	52
Families	0	0	2	1	1	0	1	4	1	3	4	1	18
General Practitioner	8	26	24	22	12	21	25	28	13	28	30	29	266
Community Nursing	7	8	28	27	19	20	17	33	13	15	24	23	234
Multidisciplinary Teams	3	8	3	6	1	5	0	3	1	0	4	4	38
Social Services	2	1	0	2	0	1	2	2	3	1	2	0	16
Total All Sources	45	70	98	97	61	99	93	113	60	77	97	108	1018

CAMHS - Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service

AHP - Allied Health Profession (i.e. Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy, Podiatry & Dietetics)

11 January 2023

Statistics relating to demographic of those referred for consultation, i.e. age, sex, religion, ethnicity, parental income bracket

Please see Question 3 for age and sex. Belfast Trust do not gather all of the other information requested and it would require in excess of 18 hours work to try to provide an answer.

The Trust considers that the cost of retrieving the information would be above the 'Appropriate Limit', as defined by the Freedom of Information Act under Section 12.

What outside agencies do the Trust engage with to conduct assessments, e.g. Sensations, Barnardos?

SENsations, Insight Speech & Language Therapy and Templepatrick Paediatric Clinic

What outside agencies do the Trust engage with post diagnosis, e.g. Sensations, Barnados?

Autism NI, National Autistic Society, Cedar Foundation and SENsations.