

16 February 2024

Gender Identity Clinics

1. **How many patients are currently on the waiting list for a first appointment to be seen by Gender Identity Clinic?**

Adult Service

828

Children's Service – Knowing Our Identity (KOI)

47

2. **What is the longest period a patient has been on the waiting list to be seen by your Gender Identity Clinic?**

Adult Service

The service waiting list is a live document and, therefore, the service does not hold retrospective data on previous waiting times. The current wait time for a first appointment is 6 years, 3 months.

Children's Service (KOI)

Current longest wait is 119 weeks.

3. **How many staff by grade and occupation are employed within your organisation to provide Gender Identity Clinic services to patients and members of the public?**

Adult Service

0.4 WTE Consultant Psychiatrist / Gender Specialist

2.3 WTE Band 7 Gender Therapists – these staff members have a range of core professional backgrounds (Nursing, Social Work and Occupational Therapy).

Children's Service (KOI)

0.2 WTE Consultant Psychiatrist

Service funded for 0.5 Band 8A Nurse and 0.5 Psychologist but it has been difficult to recruit to these part-time posts and so, currently, the service is using funding for temporary 1.0 WTE Band 7 Nurse Specialist.

A business case was submitted to the Strategic Planning and Performance Group (SPPG) in January 2023 for additional funding to make up to 1 WTE Band 8A Nurse and 1 WTE 8A Psychologist.

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4. What support are you providing to patients whilst they are on the waiting list for a first appointment at a Gender Identity Clinic?

Adult Service

Patients receive written correspondence from the service advising that they have been placed on a waiting list. This letter provides information on relevant local Community and Voluntary support services, including the Transgender NI website and Rainbow Project, which individuals may seek to engage with for support.

This letter also includes a link to the service clinic's webpage, where the individual can keep track of what month and year those referred are currently being seen.

Whilst the clinic does not provide any regular direct support to those on the waiting list, where requested, a gender clinician will return emails or calls to individuals on the waiting list, or their carers, who are seeking specific advice regarding supports available to them.

Children's Service (KOI)

The KOI service will liaise with a patient's Child and Adult Mental Health service (CAMHS) clinician who is providing mental health interventions and support while they are waiting for assessment. This clinician will provide them with information and advice regarding the community and voluntary support services that are available in their area.

Whilst the clinic does not provide any regular direct support to those on the waiting list, the local Step 3 CAMHS Team can continue to avail of reflective sessions and consultation with KOI.

5. Do you provide any interim support to General Practitioners whilst a patient is waiting for a first appointment to be seen by your Gender Identity Service having been referred?

Adult Service

Any requests for advice, discussion or consultation by a GP via telephone, email or letter, is delegated to the most appropriate member of clinical staff within the gender clinic who will endeavour to assist the GP with their query. Whilst we are unable to provide specific guidance to the GP regarding a particular individual, we are able to provide information such as referral and service pathways and general safety monitoring guidelines.

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Children's Service (KOI)

Any requests for advice, discussion or consultation by a GP via telephone, email or letter, is delegated to the most appropriate member of clinical staff within the gender clinic who will endeavour to assist the GP with their query. As a regional service, often the local Community CAMHS Team may receive these calls from GPs in their Trust area. They can liaise with KOI for further advice also. Whilst we are unable to provide specific guidance to the GP regarding a particular individual, we are able to provide information such as referral and service pathways and general safety monitoring guidelines.

6. What actions and policies do you have in respect of improvements to waiting lists and times for patients to be seen by your Gender Identity Clinic/services?

Adult Service

Similar to other gender clinics across the UK, and indeed other health departments in Northern Ireland, there is a rising demand for the services of the Brackenburn Clinic, thus waiting times are greater than we would wish.

Unfortunately over the past number of years, due to increased demand and a limited ability to respond, the service has been unable to progress the waiting list in line with targeted waiting times.

The Department of Health instructed SPPG to undertake a review of the Regional Gender Identity Service pathway. Belfast Health and Social Care Trust awaits completion of this and a full public consultation by the Department of Health.

The Adult Gender Identity Clinic has completed a comprehensive waiting list validation initiative in November 2022 to communicate to all patients on our waiting list.

This waiting list initiative followed the Integrated Elected Access Protocol guidelines regarding waiting list reviews.

Children's Service (KOI)

Similar to other gender clinics across the UK, and indeed other health departments in Northern Ireland, there is a rising demand for the services of the KOI team, thus waiting times are greater than we would wish.

Unfortunately over the past number of years, due to increased demand and a limited ability to respond, the service has been unable to progress the waiting list in line with targeted waiting times.

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The Department of Health instructed SPPG to undertake a review of the Regional Gender Identity Service pathway. Belfast Health and Social Care Trust awaits completion of this and a full public consultation by the Department of Health.

All patients on the waiting list for KOI continue to be seen by their local Trust Community CAMHS Team who can consult with and avail of professional reflective sessions with the service regarding any patients.

7. What is the annual budget and operating costs for Gender Identity Clinics/Services operated by your organisation, can you please provide figures for the past 3 years.

Adult Service

BREAKDOWN OF BUDGET & SPEND		
	BUDGET	SPEND
22/23		
CLINICAL / DIAGNOSTIC	259,191	200,529
ADMIN	34,566	2,738
NON PAY	21,960	29,930
TOTAL	315,717	233,197
21/22		
CLINICAL / DIAGNOSTIC	248,646	114,149
ADMIN	32,694	33,736
NON PAY	21,960	8,217
TOTAL	303,300	156,102
20/21		
CLINICAL / DIAGNOSTIC	243,509	146,877
ADMIN	31,713	31,715
NON PAY	21,960	-
TOTAL	297,182	178,592

unable to provide spend figure

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Children's Service (KOI)

	Budget	Spend
22/23		
Pay	120454	64902
Non Pay	16492	5824
Total	136946	70726
21/22		
Pay	116248	133487
Non Pay	16492	18060
Total	132740	151547
20/21		
Pay	112836	129975
Non Pay	16492	24997
Total	129328	154972

8. Does your Trust publish any policies on interim medication and hormone replacement therapy for patients, sometimes called bridging prescribing, to reduce self-harm or similar? If so, please could you provide a copy of the policy?

Adult Service

There is no commissioned Adult Endocrine Service for gender patients, therefore bridging prescribing is not possible.

Children's Service (KOI)

Changes to the service specification for Knowing Our Identity were made with SPPG in March 2020. New referrals after this date to KOI no longer have access to an endocrine pathway, therefore bridging prescribing is not possible.