

5 August 2025

Paediatric Surgery Referrals and Cross-Border Treatment Pathways

Any current policies, protocols, or contracts held by Belfast Health and Social Care Trust relating to the referral of paediatric patients to hospitals outside Northern Ireland for specialised treatment — including those in:

- Great Britain (e.g., England, Scotland, Wales)
- Republic of Ireland

Provider	MoU Speciality	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Alder Hey Children's	Scoliosis	0	0	5
Children's Health Ireland	Paediatric Pain Service	0	3	0
Guys and St Thomas (Evelina Network)	Paediatric Gastrostomy	0	0	0
NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde (NHS GGC)	Thoracic (Pectus Carinatum Bracing)	0	9	25
RNOH Stanmore	Scoliosis	13	0	7

Patients included are those aged 16 and under during the financial year they have been reported in.

**Patients reported for NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde refer to the calendar years 2024 and 2025.

The number of paediatric patients referred by the Trust to external hospitals for specialist treatment not available in Northern Ireland, broken down by year for the period 2022–2024. If possible, please also break this down by:

- Age group (e.g., 0–5 years)
- Type of treatment or specialty (e.g., urology, renal surgery)

Specialism	2022-2023	2023-2024	Grand Total
Cardiology		2	2
Clinical Genetics		3	3
Hepatology		1	1
Immunology		1	1
Oncology		1	1
Ophthalmology		2	2
Orthopaedics		2	2
Otolaryngology		1	1
Paediatric Allergy Service		2	2
Paediatric Andrology	1		1

5 August 2025

Paediatric Cardiology	1	5	6
Paediatric Clinical Genetics	2		2
Paediatric Colorectal	1		1
Paediatric Dermatology		1	1
Paediatric Endocrinology	1		1
Paediatric Gastroenterology	8	16	24
Paediatric Gynaecology		1	1
Paediatric Haematology	19	16	35
Paediatric Hepatology	3	8	11
Paediatric Immunology	5	3	8
Paediatric Metabolic Medicine	3	3	6
Paediatric Nephrology		4	4
Paediatric Neurology	52	34	86
Paediatric Neurosurgery		3	3
Paediatric Oncology	8	7	15
Paediatric Ophthalmology	7	10	17
Paediatric Orthopaedics	7	6	13
Paediatric Orthopaedics		8	8
Paediatric Otolaryngology	2	1	3
Paediatric Plastic Surgery	1	2	3
Paediatric Respiratory		2	2
Paediatric Rheumatology	1	1	2
Paediatric Urology	6	11	17
Paediatrics General	11	5	16
Plastic Surgery		1	1
Radiation Oncology		2	2
Grand Total	139	165	304

Any internal reports, reviews, or assessments carried out in the past five years concerning delays or challenges in accessing specialist paediatric surgery for patients within the Trust's care.

There have been ongoing challenges over the past 5 years in delivering specialist paediatric surgery for patients within the Trust's care due to a number of variables which have been on the Children's Hospital risk register following risk assessment. However, the only formal review which has been completed during this period has been a Getting it Right First Time Project Team (GIRFT) visit which was commissioned by the Department of Health in 2024 and resulted in a report which while focussing mainly on the issues pertaining to access to paediatric trauma and Orthopaedics offered more widespread recommendations for the Children's Hospital

5 August 2025

Theatres. It also focussed on reviewing the requirement to reopen Musgrave Park Hospital as an elective site for Paediatric Orthopaedics. This report is available on the DoH website.

Whether the Trust has experienced delays in securing surgical treatment for children due to a lack of formal agreements or contracts with out-of-region hospitals, and what steps (if any) have been taken to address these issues.

A contract is in place to send patients to Stanmore Hospital in London and Alderhey Hospital in Manchester for Scoliosis Surgery due to lack of capacity in Belfast. This is using elective assess funding when identified and provided by Strategic Planning and Performance Group, (SPPG) and Department of Health.

Patients awaiting complex surgery such as scoliosis surgery are also referred to Stanmore under an Extra Contractual Referral, (ECR) which is managed by SPPG and funded by SPPG.