

02 October 2026

Special Educational Needs (SEN) Provision

Special Educational Needs (SEN) provision within the Belfast Trust, covering the most recent full financial year for which data is available:

1. Staffing

- The number of whole-time equivalent (WTE) staff employed specifically in SEN or learning disability support roles (children and young people), broken down by role / profession (e.g. speech and language therapists, occupational therapists, specialist nurses, educational psychologists, support workers).

Psychology Service Response

In relation to Special Educational Needs, psychological support is the responsibility of the Education Authority and the Department of Education.

They can be contacted via:

infogov@eani.org.uk

Freedom.info@education-ni.gov.uk

Children's Community Services

The Children with Disabilities Service does not have staff employed specifically in SEN roles; therefore, this request is not relevant.

As this request is in respect of Special Educational Needs provision, the Children with Disabilities service would advise that this information be sought from the Department of Education.

They can be contacted via: Freedom.info@education-ni.gov.uk

Physiotherapy Response

The table below shows current WTE for Belfast Trust, where staff are based in a Special School or deliver to Specialist provisions settings.

It is important to highlight that staff providing services in these settings may deliver to children who are not statemented initially for physiotherapy, but whose needs have subsequently changed.

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Band	WTE
7	5.07
6	6.48
5	2.0
4	1.06
3	3.66

Orthoptics Response:

Funded staffing: 1.6 WTE: Orthoptist and 0.6 WTE Band 3 Assistant.

Occupational Therapy Response:

The number of WTE Occupational Therapy staff employed specifically in SEN (Special Schools OT Service):

B7 Advanced Practitioner OT	5.32wte
B6 Specialist OT	10.35wte
B4 Technical Instructor, OT	4.10wte
B3- OT Assistant	1.6wte

Speech and Language Therapy Response:

	WTE
Special Schools	38.86 wte

- **The number of agency / bank staff used in SEN roles and associated costs.**

Speech and Language Therapy Response:

	WTE
Special Schools	0.4 wte

2. Costs

- **The total expenditure on SEN-related services for children and young people**
- **A breakdown of costs by service type (e.g. therapy services, specialist residential / respite, day provision, community support)**
- **Any SEN-related packages commissioned from the independent / voluntary sector and the total value of those contracts**

Belfast Trust does not centrally hold financial information to allow us to respond to the above questions. The Trust considers that the cost of

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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.

3. Facilities and Resources

- **A list of facilities operated or commissioned by the Trust specifically for children and young people with SEN or learning disabilities, including type of provision and location**

Children's Community services operate and commission a number of services for children with a disability including:

Residential Care (Trust Operated)

Somerton Road Residential Unit, North Belfast
Willow Lodge Residential Unit, North Belfast
Forest Lodge Children's Nursing Home, South Belfast and
Forest Lodge Children's Home for short breaks, South Belfast.

All of these services run at full capacity

Residential Care (Trust Commissioned)

Three Steps (Republic of Ireland)
Lifestyles (Derry) and
Barnardos Whistle Stop Short Break Service.

Foster care

The Trust has carers who provide short break foster care. There are less than five carers currently providing short breaks and other carers are currently progressing through the assessment process.

Children's Inreach Support Service

Intensive support provided in family homes and community settings based on assessed need.

Children with Disability Social Work Service

The Trust has three dedicated social work teams in the Children with Disabilities Service.

Children's Nursing Learning Disability Service

The Trust has a dedicated team of Learning Disability Nurses in the Children with Disabilities service.

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Community Based Services (Commissioned)

Day care and family support services commissioned from community and voluntary sector providers.

Details of any specialist residential or respite facilities, including capacity and current occupancy

The Trust can confirm that specialist residential and respite facilities are in operation and continue to provide services to children and young people with disabilities.

However, the Trust is withholding detailed capacity and occupancy figures where the numbers are fewer than five.

Disclosure of small numbers relating to children receiving highly specialised disability, residential or respite services could result in the identification of individual children when combined with other information reasonably available within the community. The information therefore constitutes personal data as defined by the UK General Data Protection Regulation and Data Protection Act 2018.

The Trust considers that disclosure would contravene the first data protection principle relating to the lawful, fair and transparent processing of personal data. Accordingly, this information is exempt from disclosure under Section 40(2) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (Personal Information).

4. Demand and Waiting Times

- **The number of children and young people currently on a waiting list for SEN-related assessment or services**

Physiotherapy:

In Belfast Trust, there are currently seven children waiting for SEN related assessment / services on the schools waiting list. These are children who are in schools where there is no therapy team based in the school.

Orthoptics:

Currently there are 50 children awaiting screening in this academic year.

Longest wait overdue review 5/12.

Speech and Language Therapy:

	No. Currently Waiting List for SEN
Special Schools	0

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Occupational Therapy Response:

There are currently 69 children and young people on the Schools OT Service waiting list.

Children's Community Services

The Children with a Disability social work service do not undertake SEN or SEN related assessments and do not have specific SEN related services.

- **Average waiting time for initial assessment and for access to services, by service type**

Physiotherapy:

Children typically wait less than 4 weeks for assessment and access to services.

Orthoptics:

Longest wait overdue review 5/12

Speech and Language Therapy:

	Average Waiting Time for Initial Assessment
Special Schools	0
Child Development Team	6 weeks

Occupational Therapy Response:

The current average waiting time for assessment with the Special schools OT service is 17 weeks.

Children's Community Service

There are 33 children on the Children with Disability service waiting list awaiting a UNOCINI assessment. The longest wait for assessment is currently 108 days (at 03/09/26).

5. Strategic and Governance Information

Any current strategy, policy, or action plan relating to SEN provision held by the Trust

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Belfast Trust do not have a specific strategy for AHP services relating to SEN.
We do engage with the Department of Health to plan services to meet demand
of the number of SEN children and schools each year.