Belfast Health and Social Care Trust
caring supporting improving together

FOI/38049

30 October 2026

How many children under the age of 18 have been referred to the Learning Disability Team?

1. **How many children under the age of 18 have been referred to the Learning Disability Team,**

Clarification was sought from the requestor who confirmed that the information sought is the referrals to the Children with Disabilities Service for each month of the last five years. Please see table below:

April 2021 - March 2022	Apr-21	May-21	Jun-21	Jul-21	Aug-21	Sep-21	Oct-21	Nov-21	Dec-21	Jan-22	Feb-22	Mar-22	**2021/22 Total**
	15	16	30	24	27	26	19	23	18	27	31	30	**286**
April 2022 - March 2023	Apr-22	May-22	Jun-22	Jul-22	Aug-22	Sep-22	Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23	**2022/23 Total**
	22	36	36	29	23	27	34	29	21	23	32	36	**348**
April 2023 - March 2024	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23	Jan-24	Feb-24	Mar-24	**2023/24 Total**
	18	36	25	15	34	27	31	35	22	26	28	42	**339**
April 2024 - March 2025	Apr-24	May-24	Jun-24	Jul-24	Aug-24	Sep-24	Oct-24	Nov-24	Dec-24	Jan-25	Feb-25	Mar-25	**2024/25 Total**
	33	33	30	28	26	30	34	32	16	24	25	31	**342**
April 2025 - March 2026	Apr-25	May-25	Jun-25	Jul-25	Aug-25	Sep-25	Oct-25	Nov-25	Dec-25	Jan-26	Feb-26	Mar-26	**2025/26 Total**
	32	45	48	31	28	23	26	44	25	34	30	40	**406**
April 2026 - September 2026	Apr-26	May-26	Jun-26	Jul-26	Aug-26	Sep-26							
	35	39	38	34	23	31							

2. **How many have been seen, the average waiting time at the end of the month for each month of the last five years,**

Belfast Trust does not centrally collate information in relation to waiting times in this way. This would require an extensive manual count of files which would exceed timeframe.

We estimate that compliance with this request for information would exceed the appropriate costs limit. Under Section 12 of the Freedom of Information 2000, the limit has been specified as £450 and represents the estimated cost of one or more persons spending 18 hours in determining whether we hold the information, locating, retrieving and extracting this information.

3. **How many people have been refused assessment,**

When children/young people meet the eligibility criteria they are not refused an assessment.

The Service triaging and assessment process includes;

- Referral made, no formal diagnosis/does not meet criteria – families are signposted to other services including community and voluntary services, or the Children's Gateway Service.
- Referral made, child/young person meets criteria for the service- triaging completed by Duty Social Worker but does not require Social Work intervention at that time, signposting completed. Parent/carer aware that they can re-engage with the service should their circumstances change.
- Referral made, children/young person meets criteria and through the triaging process, parent/carer and service determine that Social Work intervention is required and they are either added to the waiting list or prioritised for allocation based on initial screening of need and risk.

4. **How many of those refused assessment have had a subsequent assessment request.**

As per above, Belfast Trust Children with Disabilities Service does not refuse assessment for children/young people who meet the eligibility criteria. Through the triaging process, the assessment is made whether social work intervention is required at the time of referral, this is in collaboration with the family. Many families are content with advice, support and signposting.

The Belfast Trust does not collate data regarding the numbers for re-referrals into the service – this would require a manual trawl to determine this level of detail. However, each referral and information is considered in its own right at the time of referral.

Belfast Trust are unable to provide the above information as it is not centrally collated to provide. To undertake this exercise would necessitate a manual interrogation of data.

We estimate that compliance with this request for information would exceed the appropriate costs limit. Under Section 12 of the Freedom of Information 2000, the limit has been specified as £450 and represents the estimated cost of one or more persons spending 18 hours in determining whether we hold the information, locating, retrieving and extracting this information.

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5. **Also, a copy of each Trust policy in relation to the process for assessment and the basis for refusing assessment for those referred.**

The process for assessment is outlined in previous answers available above and sits within the UNOCINI assessment framework. Please see link below which provides information in relation to UNOCINI assessment framework:

Understanding the Needs of Children in Northern Ireland (UNOCINI) Guidance | Department of Health

As per question 3, families are not refused an assessment when they meet the eligibility criteria.