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ADHD Assessments: Belfast Health and Social Care Trust

I am writing to make a request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 for the following information regarding ADHD assessments within Belfast Health and Social Care Trust. The Department of Health (SPPG) advised us (FOI ref DOH 2026-0116) that ADHD services are not regionally commissioned and that the individual HSC Trusts may hold this information.

For your reference, the DOH's response to us — so you can see exactly what was asked and how it was redirected to your Trust — is published here (and attached) :

<https://adhduk.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/06/2026.0630-NI-DOH-2026-0116.pdf>

Adult ADHD Assessments

1. How many adults do you have waiting for an ADHD diagnosis at the moment?

There are currently 4970 individuals who have been referred for an assessment appointment.

2. How many adults were given an ADHD Assessment in the last year (1st April 2025 - 31st March 2026).

The discoverable data for that period does not delineate clearly between new assessments and review appointments. The Adult provision is a non-commissioned service that was reconfigured out of core Community Mental Health Teams. There were 229 appointments carried out, these were a combination of review appointments of the existing caseload and possibly some new assessments. The limited resource has responded by giving clinically priority as and when deemed appropriate.

3. If an adult was referred to you now when would you expect them to be seen?

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The Adult ADHD assessment provision is a very small, non-commissioned service. Given the current number of individuals awaiting assessment, the size of the existing caseload, and ongoing staffing pressures, it is not possible at this time to provide an accurate estimate of when a newly referred adult would be offered an initial assessment.

4. Please describe your current Adult ADHD Assessment pathway.

The current pathway begins with a detailed GP referral that should include information as per the NICE guidelines. Post triage the referral is added to the existing waiting list.

Child ADHD Assessments with CAMHS (Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service)

5. How many children do you have waiting for an ADHD diagnosis at the moment?

CAMHS: BHSCT provides CAMHS services for both BHSCT & SEHSCT areas.

We do not hold a waiting list for ADHD assessments in Community CAMHS. Once a clinician believes an ADHD assessment is appropriate and the possible ADHD traits are impacting the young person's mental health presentation, they will step their young person onto our dedicated CAMHS ADHD pathway where completion of screening questionnaires and a neurodevelopmental assessment with the child, young person and family will be the first step.

SEHSCT CAMHS: currently 8 young people are at various stages along our CAMHS ADHD pathway.

BHSCT CAMHS: currently 32 young people are at various stages along our CAMHS ADHD pathway

6. How many children were given an ADHD Assessment in the last year (1st April 2025 - 31st March 2026).

SEHSCT CAMHS:

25 Confirmed diagnoses of ADHD

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- 3 Confirmed NOT ADHD
- 8 Undergoing ADHD assessment by end date

BHSCT CAMHS:

22 young people had completed ADHD assessments within CAMHS (both meeting diagnostic threshold, and not). A further 10 were at some stage along the assessment pathway but had not yet reached the diagnostic decision-making stage

7. If a child was referred to you now when would you expect them to be seen?

CAMHS:

Young people are not referred into CAMHS solely for an ADHD assessment. This is only completed when comorbid mental health conditions are present. As above, once a clinician believes an ADHD assessment is appropriate, they will step their young person onto our dedicated CAMHS ADHD pathway where their completion of a neurodevelopmental assessment with the family will be the first step.

8. Please describe your current Child ADHD Assessment pathway.

CAMHS:

Our CAMHS ADHD pathway begins with a neurodevelopmental assessment with the young person's parent or guardian. If there is evidence of potential ADHD symptoms from an early age then screening tools such as a SNAP may be used followed by completion of Conners Rating Scales (Parent, Teacher and Self). School reports will also be gathered to provide further evidence of strengths and weaknesses across contexts. Once all assessment information has been gathered the young person will be discussed at our monthly ADHD MDT meeting at which time the threshold for diagnosis of ADHD may be met, not met, or more assessment required (for example, psychometrics). The MDT meeting typically includes a mix of psychology, psychiatry, nursing and social work professionals who agree if the threshold is met. A feedback session, report of outcome, and signposting will follow. If ADHD medication is something that the family want to explore after diagnosis, this is facilitated. We are currently working on developing our post diagnostic supports.

Child ADHD Assessments

5. How many children do you have waiting for an ADHD diagnosis at the moment?

The number of children awaiting an ADHD Assessment is 1214 as of 06 July 2026.

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6. How many children were given an ADHD Assessment in the last year (1st April 2025 - 31st March 2026).

Due to changes to our referral and assessment pathway over the past 18mths; we are not able to provide data from April 2025 until June 2025.

We are able to provide data from 23 June 2025 until 24 June 2026. The minimum number of children who have been offered ADHD assessment over this period is 386.

The data does not record other children who may have had an ADHD assessment and were previously known to Community Paediatricians and attending other clinics eg: Epilepsy clinic, paediatric clinic etc.

7. If a child was referred to you now when would you expect them to be seen?

Currently the longest **routine** ADHD waiter was referred on 07 May 2021.

We expect children referred today will receive an appointment in **5 years and 2 months**.

Children who are graded as **urgent** priority can expect to have their appointment within 6-8 weeks.

If children reach **P7 school age range** and are still waiting to be seen they are reprioritised to ensure their assessment is commenced. We aim to complete these assessments within the child's P7 year. If a child is referred within their P7 year, we will aim to honour their assessment.

8. Please describe your current Child ADHD Assessment pathway.

Community Paediatric ADHD Services Overview

In Belfast Trust, Community Paediatrics provide a Children's ADHD Service. This is not a formally commissioned service.

This service provides diagnostic assessments for children aged >6 years to the end of their primary 7 year. We are unable to provide post-primary diagnostic assessments. We are unable to provide assessments for children with severe learning difficulty/disability.

We provide a review service for children who are prescribed ADHD medications until they are 18 years old.

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The Multidisciplinary Team consists of Consultant Paediatricians, Speciality Doctors, 1 Non-medical Prescribing (NMP) Nurse, Health Care Assistants and Administrative staff.

Referrals are made by GPs, Health care professionals and educational psychologists. Alongside the referral form completed by a health care professional; we request that a school information form is completed by the child's teacher/SENCO. This is consistent with NICE guidelines detailing difficulties must be observed across multiple settings eg: home and school. Where a child is not attending school; we will request information from alternative sources eg: childcare providers, clubs or group leaders/coaches.

These referrals are channelled through our partial booking office in community paediatrics. They are triaged weekly by consultant paediatricians and/or NMP nurses on the Encompass system.

Our ADHD assessment pathway has undergone service development over the past 18 months. This has been in response to long wait times and a desire for quality improvement. We have made changes to the assessment pathway following a pilot project of ADHD assessments for P7 pupils in 2024/2025.

When a child nears the top of our waiting list; parents will be contacted to seek permission to send standardised Conners rating scales to parent and school. These rating scales are emailed to home and school.

Following receipt of completed Conners questionnaires; an appointment is booked for a QB test. The QB test is carried out by health care assistants.

When the QB test is completed, the child's case will be listed for a multi-disciplinary screening meeting. These occur once per week with consultant paediatricians and NMP Nurses.

The Conners and QB results are reviewed in line with NICE guidance. Relevant medical history is reviewed, where available, on our electronic records eg: ECR, Paris and Encompass systems.

If Conners questionnaires do not meet diagnostic criteria in line with NICE guidance and the QB test is not suggestive or supportive of a diagnosis of ADHD; the child is discharged from the assessment pathway at this point. A report of the investigations and multi-disciplinary discussions are sent to parents/guardians and GP. The letter also contains details on sources of support for the family eg: family support hubs.

If Conners questionnaires and/or QB are suggestive of difficulties which may be in keeping with ADHD or if they are inconclusive; further assessment is warranted. The child will be listed for a neurodevelopmental history which is completed with their parent/guardian. At this point we may collect further information, for example social communication questionnaires or further evidence from school.

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The child and their parent/carer will then be offered a face-to-face appointment where they will have a clinical examination and receive feedback of their assessment.

If a young person receives a diagnosis of ADHD, medication will be discussed alongside sign-posting to sources of support for the family.

If the child is established on medication, they will remain under review in the community paediatric ADHD clinic in line with the shared cared agreement. They will attend regularly for height, weight and blood pressure monitoring.

If the young person remains on medication at 17 yrs old, we will arrange for them to have a QB test on and off medication in preparation for transition to adult services. In Belfast Trust, young people are referred to adult services within 9 weeks of their 18th birthday and if they remain on medication. If a young person with ADHD is not on medication at the point of exit from our service, they are discharged to their GP with advice regarding onward referral to adult services, should they request this in the future.