

Freedom of Information (FOI)

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Henry Shelford

Via email: research@adhduk.co.uk

Date: 11/08/2026

Tel: 01856 888 220

Enquiries to: FOI Officer

Email: ork.foirequests@nhs.scot

Dear Henry Shelford,

RE: Freedom of Information Request 202627/062 – ADHD Assessments

Your Query and NHSO Response	Date of Request	May 2026
I am writing to make a request under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 for the following information regarding ADHD assessments within NHS Orkney. Adult ADHD Assessments - How many adults do you have waiting for an ADHD diagnosis at the moment? As of 11th August 2026, approximately 136 people were awaiting an ADHD assessment or a combined ADHD and Autism assessment. Please note a proportion of referrals have not specified whether an ADHD or Autism assessment is required. As new referral forms and screening processes are being developed by the NHS Orkney Adult Neurodevelopmental Service, it is likely that these figures are an under-representation of the actual number waiting specifically for an ADHD assessment. - How many adults were given an ADHD Assessment in the last year (1st April 2025 - 31st March 2026). Data from CMHT is only available up to August 2025. During that period, a total of 8 ADHD diagnoses were given, with 29 referrals requesting an ADHD assessment. Between August and December 2025, the NHS Orkney Adult Neurodevelopmental Service was in development while service approaches to clinical assessment were explored and piloted. From spring 2026, the service commenced AQAS-aligned ADHD assessments, with 8 neurodevelopmental assessments undertaken during that period. - If an adult was referred to you now when would you expect them to be seen? The NHS Orkney Adult Neurodevelopmental Service is unable to provide accurate expected waiting times for neurodevelopmental assessment, as waiting times are determined by individual clinical need, the complexity of referrals, and service capacity at any given time. At present, the service is assessing adults with neurodevelopmental conditions (ADHD, Autism, or both) who were referred in November 2024. - Please describe your current Adult ADHD Assessment pathway. The NHS Orkney Adult Neurodevelopmental (ND) Service is continuing to evolve. Draft pathway documents are nearing completion and are due to be circulated to stakeholders imminently, following input from colleagues involved in designing the medical component of the pathway. The current agreed adult ADHD assessment pathway is primarily via GP referral directly to the NHS Orkney ND Service through SCI Gateway or via the service email address. Referrals may also be received from CMHT, Psychology, or LDANS via email to the ND team. Once referrals are received, ND Service psychologists jointly screen each referral. The referral is either accepted or declined, and the outcome is communicated to both the referrer and the patient.		

Orkney NHS Board Headquarters: The Balfour, Foreland Road, Kirkwall, Orkney KW15 1NZ

Board Chair: David Campbell

Interim Chief Executive: James Goodyear

When assessment is approaching, pre-assessment questionnaires are completed by patients and collateral informants via email. Assessment appointments are then arranged in line with AQAS standards and NICE guidelines.

The assessment takes 4 hour - 4.5 hours in total, takes place over several sessions and is conducted by one of the Principal Clinical Psychologists. It comprises of a clinical interview with the client, plus a validated structured ADHD assessment with the client and a childhood informant, typically a parent. It is followed by a post-diagnostic intervention session, covering diagnostic outcome, signposting & recommendations.

Patients diagnosed with ADHD by the ND team may utilise this non-pharmacological intervention and third sector supports and be discharged at this point. They may also choose to be referred for consideration of ADHD medication.

Child ADHD Assessments

5. How many children do you have waiting for an ADHD diagnosis at the moment?
NHS Orkney does not currently have a separate Paediatric Neurodevelopmental Service.

The CAMHS ND pathway is for individuals open to CAMHS with comorbid complex mental health problems who are awaiting neurodevelopmental assessment. The CAMHS pathway is for assessment of neurodevelopmental conditions, rather than a single condition approach to assessment. We are therefore unable to provide a number for those under the age of 18 who are currently waiting to be assessed for ADHD, as requested. The number of children/young people currently on the [CAMHS neurodevelopmental assessment waiting list](#) is 25.

6. How many children were given an ADHD Assessment in the last year (1st April 2025 - 31st March 2026). CAMHS are unable to accurately provide this data unless there is a manual trawl through letters/notes. The question states "given an ADHD assessment" and again, unable to provide this figure as CAMHS carry out a broad Neurodevelopmental Assessment rather than a single condition approach to assessment.

This information is not held centrally or in a fashion that would allow us to easily provide it. This type of information would be recorded in the patient's personal health record. To collate this information would be a time consuming exercise which we estimate would be outwith the cost of compliance as this would exceed the £600 prescribed limit set in regulation 5 of the Freedom of Information (Fees for Required Disclosure) (Scotland) Regulations 2004. Therefore, NHS Orkney is not obliged under section 12(1) of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 to comply with your request.

7. If a child was referred to you now when would you expect them to be seen? CAMHS are unable to accurately provide expected waiting times for an ND assessment, as this depends on clinical need and capacity of the CAMHS service.
8. Please describe your current Child ADHD Assessment pathway.
NHS Orkney does not currently have a separate Paediatric Neurodevelopmental Service.

CAMHS does not have a child ADHD assessment pathway. The CAMHS Neurodevelopmental pathway is for individuals **open** to CAMHS with comorbid complex mental health problems who are awaiting neurodevelopmental assessment. The CAMHS pathway is for assessment of neurodevelopmental conditions, rather than a single condition approach to assessment.

Paediatric Services undertake the ADHD assessments for children who have no complex co-morbidities, and this service is separate from CAMHS

the referral criteria;
the service responsible for assessment;

who undertakes medication initiation;
who undertakes ongoing prescribing and annual review;
any published waiting time information.

I hope this helps with your request.

NHS Orkney is a small remote and rural health board within Scotland. All responses to Freedom of Information requests are collated in accordance with the terms of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002.

Under section 20(1) of the Act, if you are dissatisfied with the way NHS Orkney has dealt with your request, you have a right to ask for a review of our actions and decisions in relation to your request.

A request for review should be made within 40 working days of receipt of this letter and NHS Orkney will reply within 20 working days of receipt. Review requests should be sent in writing to FOI officer, NHS Orkney, The Balfour, Foreland Road, Kirkwall, Orkney, KW15 1NZ or by e-mail via ork.foirequests@nhs.scot.

Requests for appeal should be made in writing to: Scottish Information Commissioner, Kinburn Castle, Doubledykes Road, St Andrews, Fife, KY16 9DS. Telephone: 01334 464610, Email: enquiries@foi.scot.

Yours sincerely,

Freedom of Information Officer
NHS Orkney