

10 March 2021

**Our Ref:** RFI 37421

Dear

**Freedom of Information Act 2000  
Information in relation to the Provision of Services for Adult Autistic  
Spectrum Disorder (ASD)**

I am writing to confirm that the South Eastern Health & Social Care Trust (the Trust) has now completed its search for information relating to above which you requested on 21 January 2021. Please accept our sincere apologies for the delay in responding to you. Thank you for your patience.

A response to each of the questions raised has been provided by the Adult Services & Prison Healthcare Directorate and is attached in Appendix A.

If you are unhappy as to how this request has been handled, you have the right to seek a review within the Trust in the first instance. You should write to the Information Governance Department, Lough House, Ards Community Hospital ([informationgovernance@setrust.hscni.net](mailto:informationgovernance@setrust.hscni.net)) within two months of the date of this response and your complaint will be considered and a response provided, within 20 working days of receipt.

If, after receiving a response, you remain unhappy, you can refer your complaint to the Information Commissioner at The Information Commissioner's Office –Northern Ireland, 3rd Floor, 14 Cromac Place, Belfast, BT7 2JB. It is important to note that if you refer any matter to the Information Commissioner, you will need to show evidence of having gone through the Trust's internal review procedure to try to resolve the matter with the Trust in the first instance.

If you have any queries about this letter, please do not hesitate to contact me. Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

Yours sincerely

---

**Rebecca Manning  
Information Governance Assistant**

**Part A of request: Trust provision of adult services for Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD)**

**Q1. Can I have wait list times for adult assessment of autism for 2019 and 2020?**

A1. Please see Table 1.

Table 1

Dates	Waiting List Time
January 2019 to March 2019	12 Months
April & May 2019	12 – 14 Months
June to August 2019	16 – 18 Months
September 2019 to November 2020	18 – 24 Months
December 2020	Approximately 30 Months

**Q2. Can I have wait list times for adult autism intervention for 2019 and 2020?**

A2. Please see Table 2.

Table 2

Dates	Waiting List Time
April & May 2019	12 – 14 Months
June to August 2019	14 – 16 Months
Mid-August 2019 to December 2020	Approximately 18 Months

**Q3. Can I have the numbers of males, females and other gender (if other eg non binary is not available please state this) who are on the waitlist for an adult assessment of ASD. If current information is not available, can you give me a report from the last review of service or service analysis?**

A3. Please see Table 3.

Table 3

Diagnostic Waiting List (WL)	
Gender	Number on WL
Male	111
Female	104
Non-Binary	<5

NB. You will note that some of the numbers have been masked and this is due to small numbers within a small geographical area.

**Q4. List the services available for adults with autism.**

A4. The Services available within the Trust for adults with Autism are listed as follows:

- A Range of Group Work Programmes
- Recovery College Programmes
- Education and Employment Advocacy

**Q5. Can you list patient involvement in policy development and does that extend to adults with ASD? What is the process?**

A5. In the Trust, staff within the Adult ASD Service liaises with service users in regard to service developments. They also co-produce and co-deliver programmes with service users (for example Awareness training sessions delivered through the Trust Recovery College).

**Q6. Has there been a significant/notable reduction in service capacity, ability to deliver assessments (eg following risk assessment guidance) and timescales for adult assessment and intervention for adults with ASD as a direct result of the COVID pandemic? If you can only comment on services more generally and not in relation to ASD, please state this.**

A6. Within the Trust there has been an increase in the timescale to deliver diagnostic assessment for Adults with ASD during the Covid-19 Pandemic.

This is due to a combination of factors relating to the pandemic including the requirement to adhere to infection prevention and control measures; standardised measures are not approved by their authors to deliver remotely.

**Q7. Please define what the criteria are for an adult assessment of ASD as used by HSC and clarify if referrals can only be accepted via GP.**

A7. The Trust adheres to the referral criteria outlined in the Regional Adult Autism Service Care Pathway.

These criteria's include that the individual must reside in the Trust area and that their difficulties have a significant impact on their functioning. A range of professional's can refer to the adult diagnostic clinic.

**Part B: Carer's register information regarding ASD**

- Q1. How many people are registered as carers for autism?**
- Q2. In regards to A. how many are adults?**
- Q3. Split B. by gender for carers.**
- Q4. Can you give me a report from the last review of service or service analysis with outlines data on the age range and mean age of carers of people with ASD, of all ages?**
- Q5. Can you give me a report from the last review of service or service analysis with outlines data on the age range and mean age of carers of adults with ASD?**

A. In relation to Part B Questions 1 to 5, although the Trust does record information regarding Carers this does not include the following breakdown of information:

- Carer's for individuals with Autism.
- Carer's gender.

To obtain this information would require a manual review of records.

This would exceed the 'Appropriate Limit' as defined by the Freedom of Information Act 2000. The Trust therefore exempts the release of this information under Section 12(1).

12.-(1) Section 1(1) does not oblige a public authority to comply with a request for information if the authority estimates that the cost of complying with the request would exceed the appropriate limit.