

# Waiting times for ADHD and Autism Assessments

## Why are the waiting lists for autism and ADHD assessments so long?

We are very sorry that families are waiting so long to be seen for an ADHD or autism assessment. Reducing the wait for assessment is a top priority both for us and our commissioners.

There continues to be exceptionally high demand for appointments in our service, because of a significant and consistent increase in referrals over recent years.

The issue is not unique to Berkshire. Services across the country have also seen a large increase in referrals and have long waits for assessment. Increased awareness of autism and ADHD seem to be one of the reasons why the demand for assessment has risen so much.

There are also national shortages in the workforce, so even when we have funding to recruit additional staff, finding the right people is also a challenge. The Covid-19 pandemic has also added to the challenges.

## What are we doing to reduce waiting times?

We know how difficult it can feel not knowing when your appointment will be. We are continuing to do all we can to offer as many appointments as possible and see people as quickly as possible, while maintaining the high quality of our assessments.

There is a national shortage of qualified staff, but we have successfully **recruited more new members of staff** into the team. This means that over the past year or so we have roughly doubled the number of appointments we can offer.

Our commissioners have also provided us with **increased funding** and we have been working in partnership with private providers who can offer assessments on our behalf.

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During the pandemic, some families told us that they preferred having an **online assessment**, and we can offer these ourselves as well as through partnerships with Healios (autism assessments) and Psychiatry-UK (ADHD assessments).

Psychiatry-UK are also able to start medication where this is needed. We are, of course, ensuring this is provided to the same high standard, with all the necessary checks in place. All children and young people remain open to the service until their assessment has been completed and the child/young person has been discharged, or – when treated with medication for ADHD – transferred to the team for ongoing treatment and care.

We have also been looking at the service that we provide. Families and staff have shared their experiences of some of our **administrative processes** and we are working to make these more efficient and offer a better experience. We are going to be introducing more digital solutions so the assessment process can run more smoothly, which will also free up time for appointments.

We have also been talking to other autism and ADHD services across the country to share learning and innovation and find possible solutions to the challenges that are being faced by all services.

## Where are we trying to get to?

We are working as hard as we can to ensure that no one will be waiting for more than two years for an autism or ADHD assessment. We are very close to achieving this for autism and working hard to make sure we can do the same for ADHD.

Although is still much longer than we would like, it is very important to achieve this, and we will continue to do our best to reduce the wait further.

For information on support available before, during and after an **ADHD assessment**, please visit this QR code:



For information on support available before, during and after an **autism assessment**, please visit this QR code:

