

Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh Teaching Hospitals

NHS Foundation Trust

Information Governance Department

Suite 9
Buckingham Row
Brick Kiln Lane
Wigan
WN1 1XX

Email: foi@wwl.nhs.uk
Web: www.wwl.nhs.uk

Ref: FOI/2025/10803

Date Received: 3rd June 2025

Response Due: 1st July 2025

Date: 1st July 2025

Dear Sir/Madam

With reference to your request for information received on 3rd June 2025, I can confirm in accordance with Section 1 (1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 that we do hold part of the information you have requested. A response to each part of your request is provided below.

In your request you asked:

1. Since 2015, how many ASD diagnoses have been carried out by WWL professionals? Please provide a yearly breakdown.

This service has only been delivered by WWL since 2021, prior to this the ASD pathway was provided by Wigan Local Authority. The service has only had the capability to electronically record a diagnosis since January 2025, prior to this time no manual count of diagnosis was recorded, if recorded it would be held within individual case notes. As case notes are for the care and treatment of patients, we do not request staff to interrogate them in order to collate the information required to respond to Freedom of Information requests.

To date, since January 2025, there have been 199 autism spectrum disorder diagnoses recorded at the Trust.

2. Since 2015, how many private ASD diagnoses have been accepted and acted on (i.e. specialist education provision then procured in the form of an EHCP) NHS professionals working with the local authority? Please provide a yearly breakdown.

We are unable to provide the data as information which is presented at multiagency panel as part of the diagnosis is not differentiated within the CYP record - if the service receives a private assessment or diagnosis report, the service will review suitability and identify if there are any further gaps in evidence. This information will then be requested ahead of the CYP being presented at multi-agency panel.

3. Please describe in detail the current protocol in place for children with suspected ASD who are then referred to WWL for formal diagnostic assessment?

- The children's school-aged Neurodevelopment Pathway is managed by Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh Teaching NHS Trust within the Children's Community Specialist Services and is overseen by the Neurodevelopment Pathway Manager. The service is delivered across the Wigan Borough and will accept referrals to the pathway for children and young people who are aged from 4 to 16 years old.
- Once the referral has been received by the pathway, the family will receive a parent/carer consent form, this must be completed and returned to us. Once the consent form has been returned to us, we will request further parent/carer and education pack information.
- Once these packs are returned, they will be triaged through a multi-disciplinary triage meeting. During this time the team will determine whether any further information or onward referrals are needed for the child or young person; the team will make these onward referrals according to need.
- Once all the above information & assessments have taken place, the child or young person will then be booked onto the next available diagnostic panel appointment.
- Each child or young person's case will be discussed during the panel; during the discussion the Pathway manager alongside the paediatrician will complete a DSM-5 assessment tool to review whether the child or young person meets the criteria for a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Condition.
- After the panel decision is agreed, parents/carers will receive an outcome letter, including all reports that contributed to the decision making.
 - If the outcome was 'yes' to diagnosis, then the child or young person's family will be invited to a post diagnostic session with the Neurodevelopment Pathway
 - If the panel decision was 'no' to diagnosis, then the child or young person will stay on our Pathway as a patient for 6 months. Should any further concerns arise in the future once a 12-month time period has passed, the child or young person can be referred back onto the Pathway for the process to start again if required.
 - If the panel decision was to defer: - this means the panel felt more information was required and the decision was inconclusive. The outcome letter will share what further information is required, and the Pathway will request this information on behalf of the child or young person. Once the required information is received, the child or young person will be allocated another panel date, where the case will be re-discussed with the additional information obtained.

4. What is the current waiting time for children with suspected ASD who are referred for formal diagnostic assessment from the time of referral?

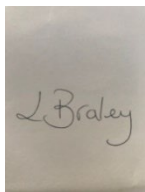
The current estimated waiting time from referral to panel is approximately 2 years.

5. Are parents informed that their child is being referred to for formal diagnostic assessment and if so, how are they informed?

The referral sent to the service should be discussed with the child and family at the point this is completed. The pathway requires written/signed consent from the family of the young person once we have processed the referral. This consent explicitly requests their consent to share information with relevant professionals who will contribute to the assessments as part of the diagnostic pathway. If this is not returned or the family do not consent, the referral is closed and no further action is taken.

If you are not entirely satisfied with this response, please do not hesitate to contact the Information Governance Department via the email address provided. If we do not hear from you within 40 days, we will assume that we have been able to accommodate your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Yours sincerely,

A square image showing a handwritten signature in dark ink on a light-colored background. The signature appears to be 'L Braley'.

Lynne Braley
Director of Operations & Performance – Community Division

PLEASE NOTE:

If you are unhappy with the service you have received in relation to your request and wish to make a complaint or request a review of our decision, you should write to: Information Governance Department, Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh NHS Foundation Trust, Suite 9, Buckingham Row, Brick Kiln Lane, Wigan, WN1 1XX.

If you are not content with the outcome of your complaint, you may apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision at:

The Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire, SK9 5AF

Helpline number: 0303 123 111