

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

HEALTH & WELLBEING BOARD

15 MARCH 2024

QUESTION No. 1 in accordance with Standing Order No 36

Jamie Gordon to ask the Chair of the Health & Wellbeing Board:

ADHD Assessment & Support

Hello, my name is Jamie & I am an ambassador for ADHD UK in Reading.

My question today relates to Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, the lack of post diagnostic support for individuals with ADHD & the wait time from when a person firsts speaks to their GP about ADHD until they receive confirmation of an ADHD assessment.

Adults with ADHD are five times more likely to take their own life than those without ADHD.

One quarter of women with ADHD have tried to take their own life.

One in 10 men with ADHD have tried to take their own life.

It is believed that 25% of adults in the criminal justice system have ADHD compared to 2.5 adults in the general population.

In Berkshire there is a 3-year waiting list from when an adult or child discusses ADHD with their Dr to when they are granted an assessment

If someone is coming to Berkshire from elsewhere in the country there is an additional 2 year waiting list for a medication review that determines wither your original diagnosis is recognised or not. It is a similar story for those who chose to go for a private assessment.

So, my questions for the panel today are:

- *To what extent are you aware of these problems?*
- *What is being done to raise awareness across all sectors about these issues?*
- *Is there anything being done to tackle the 3 year waiting lists for ADHD assessments amongst adults and children?*

REPLY by the Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board (Councillor McEwan):

Waiting times

Below is the picture Berkshire wide. Waits can vary as some assessments will be prioritised due to high levels of clinical need or risk.

Children/Young People ADHD - at the end of February

- 10% have been waiting for more than 2 years
- The average wait for those who were seen in February was 104 weeks

Adult ADHD - of those seen 2023-24 to date

The majority of those seen (59%) had a wait of 2-3 years, with 33% waiting less than 2 years. However 8% waited longer than 3 years.

Transfer from another NHS provider or from a private provider

When a child/young person or adult (taking ADHD medication) transfers from another NHS provider or wishes to move their care to the NHS from a private provider, the assessment report

is reviewed. Providing it contains all of the information we need; the wait for a medication appointment will be up to 18 months for children/young people and over a year for adults. If the report does not contain all of the information required to make decisions about medication, then the wait will be the same as for a new assessment. The GP will usually be able to continue prescribing ADHD medication while they wait for the appointment. Unfortunately, we are not able to prioritise appointments on the basis of a private provider having started ADHD medication. When a private provider initiates medication, the responsibility for monitoring and reviewing this remains with them until we can offer an appointment.

To what extent are you aware of these problems?

The system is very aware of the issues affecting ADHD services. Referrals have long outstripped the service capacity and this has resulted in large numbers waiting and long waits. This is a national picture with services across the country facing similar pressures and waits being measured across the country in years (with waits of up to 10 years being reported in some cases). This has combined with additional pressures from Covid-19 and a national shortage of qualified staff. The recent global shortage of ADHD medication has also placed additional pressures on the services. The service understands how difficult waits can be for children/young people and adults, and reducing the waiting time remains a top priority, with a great deal ongoing work. It is essential for Berkshire Healthcare, Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire Integrated Care Board (BOB ICB) and system partners to work together to respond to the challenges.

What is being done to raise awareness across all sectors about these issues?

We work in the system to emphasise the importance of early needs led support, which does not need to rely on or wait for an assessment. In terms of the support on offer, we are fortunate that in Berkshire much of the same support and advice that is available after a diagnosis is also available before an assessment.

Children and Young People: Our website has "[Getting Help Now](#)" information for families and this is also sent out. In the west of Berkshire, the NHS commissioned Children and Young People's autism and ADHD support service is delivered by Autism Berkshire and Parenting Special Children and provides a wide range of support including advice, workshops and courses which are all available to families at any point. Further information is available on their website: <https://www.autismberkshire.org.uk/berkshire-west-autism-adhd-support-service/>

NICE Guidelines recommend parent advice and training programmes following an ADHD diagnosis and families are in fact able to access this even prior to an assessment through this service and this includes a series of linked workshops:

- *Workshop 1:* Introduction to ADHD: What is ADHD/Challenges & concerns/Strengths and opportunities/Signposting to support
- *Workshop 2:* Anxiety and ADHD: What is anxiety/What is the relationship between ADHD and anxiety/Coping strategies for children/young people and parents/carers
- *Workshop 3:* Managing ADHD Behaviours: Attention Deficit Behaviours/Hyperactive Behaviours/Impulsive Behaviours/Behaviour Management Strategies

We also emphasise the need to provide support as early as possible as the young person's needs will be the same the day after an assessment as the day before. This includes free [PPEPcare](#) training to empower settings to understand and meet needs. [Neurodiversity newsletters](#) provide updates to families and other stakeholders.

The Adult ADHD service offers signposting to [online support guides](#) that offer behavioural and psychological strategies to support ADHD symptoms (including education, work, sleep, managing mood, relationships etc) and an on demand webinar. All of these resources are available at any point (including prior to assessment or without a referral).

System collaboration: Berkshire Healthcare has also been collaborating with other service providers across the region to share learning and innovation to respond to the challenges that are being faced by all services. Within Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire Integrated Care Board (BOB ICB) we have projects underway for both children/young people and adult ADHD services to determine the most effective assessment models and pathways. This includes the role of Artificial Intelligence in supporting assessments and a pilot of Spencer3D in schools (digital tool to profile and support identified needs in school settings which can happen with or without assessment or referral).

Is there anything being done to tackle the 3 year waiting lists for ADHD assessments amongst adults and children?

An ongoing programme of quality improvement and service transformation is in place. In addition both children/young people's and adult services have worked in partnership with private providers to increase the number of appointments offered. However, referrals have also increased.

Below is some of the work currently underway:

Children and Young People's ADHD

- **Increasing capacity:** Despite the national shortage of qualified staff, the service has been able to recruit to a number of new posts. We have also offered a number of weekend clinics.
- **Quality Improvement:** Current projects include improvements to the referral process, reducing DNAs, concluding assessments in as few appointments as possible, ongoing review of processes to identify and implement ways to further increase productivity (while providing good clinical quality and family experience, automating tasks to release more clinical and administrative capacity; ongoing review of skill mix required for tasks to reduce the impact of the national shortage of qualified professionals).

Adult ADHD service

- **Referral and triage process:** The Adult ADHD and Autism triage process ensures that clients referred to the service are provided with avenues for support as well as links to support with mental health to all clients referred to the service.
- **Reducing wait for annual ADHD medication review:** additional short term funding has been provided to reduce the wait for an annual medication review.
- **Quality improvement:** current projects include improving the transition for CYP (to reduce waits to be seen after transfer to the adult service and improve support and experience)