

**BEDFORDSHIRE COMMUNITY PAEDIATRICS SERVICE**  
**Service performance update**  
**9<sup>th</sup> February 2022**

The Bedfordshire Community Paediatric Service provides assessment, advice, signposting, diagnosis and medical support for children. The service works to an initial appointment response time (RRT) of 18 weeks for accepted referrals.

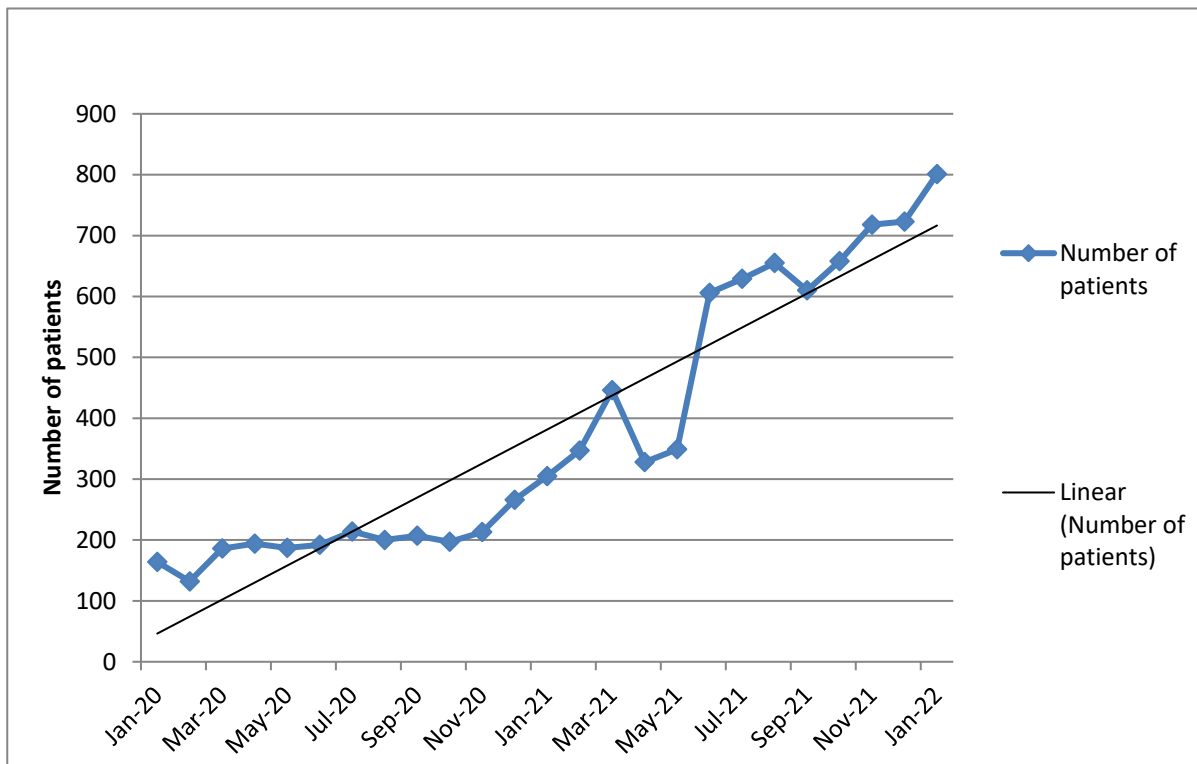
COVID-19 recovery update:

- A COVID-19 restoration plan is in place, reviewed regularly with a Quality Impact Assessment.
- The service continues to increase the number of face to face appointments.
- Video / telephone consultations are available when clinically appropriate.
- A clinical priority booking system is in place.
- A video and literature is available on the CCS website outlining current service offers.
- A COVID-19 safe Autism assessment (BOSA\* assessment) will remain as a service offer until such time it is clinically safe to resume ADOS assessments.

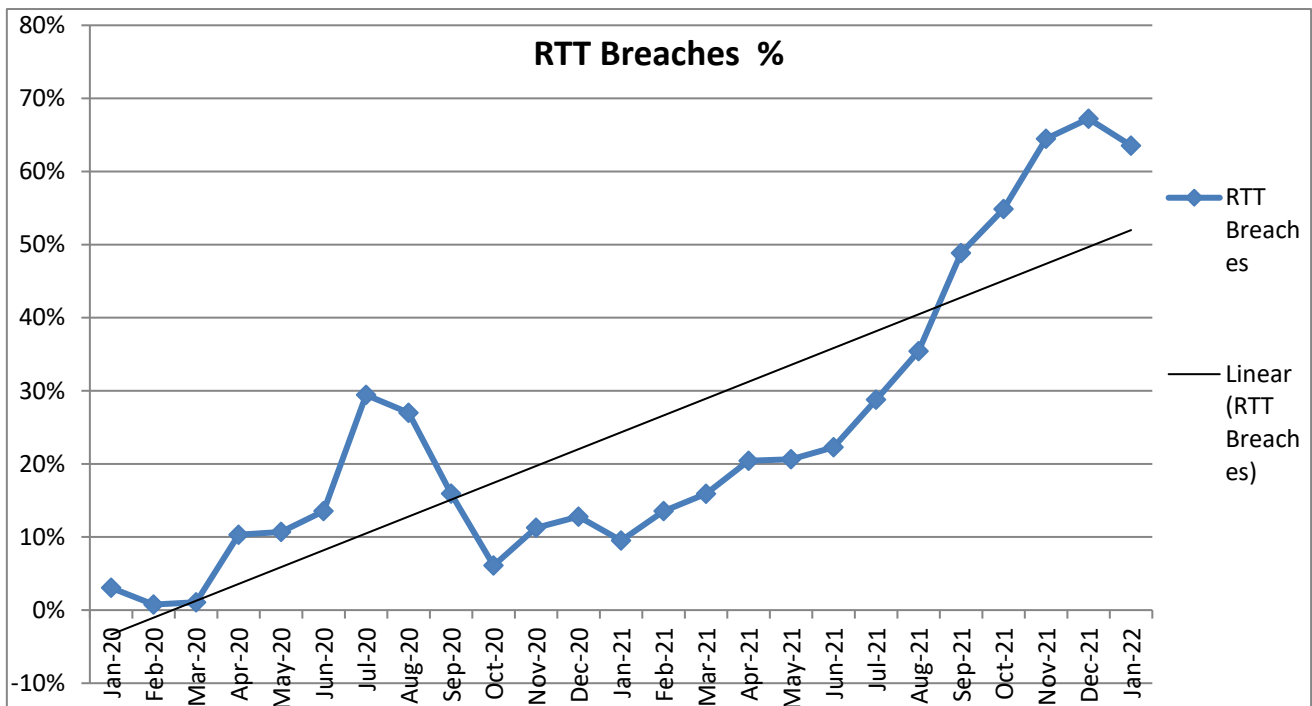
**1. Service performance and trends**

The average RTT wait is currently 36 weeks (as of Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> January 2022).

Graph 1: RTT waits up until 27<sup>th</sup> January 2022 (number of Children)



Graph 2: 18 week RTT breaches (as at 27<sup>th</sup> January 2022)



The number of appointments breaching 18 week waits has increased since July 2021; however the total number of Children waiting has reduced over the past month.

Challenges impacting improvement:

- Between October 2021 to January 2022, the service received a 30% increase in accepted referrals (n=202), in comparison to the same period last year.
- The service was impacted by long term sick leave of a Consultant Paediatrician.
- An experienced Specialist nurse left the service.
- Increased EHCP and IHA requests.
- High volume of requests to expedite/ clinically prioritise appointments.

## 2. Primary factors impacting current service performance

### Capacity required for routine physical assessments

The number of face to face appointments has increased following initial video Consultations during the pandemic, impacting service capacity.

### New appointment's vs follow up's

A balance is required between the booking of new (RTT) and follow up appointments to prevent disproportionate waits in either area. High risk medication reviews are prioritised.

### Increasing demand with complex need

Increased number of multi-disciplinary appointments required with increasing numbers of Children presenting with complex needs.

### Increased demand for EHCP assessments & Children in Care (CIC) Initial Health assessments

An increasing volume of EHCP and Initial Health Assessments (during November 21 and December 21) is resulting in service capacity being diverted from RTT and follow up appointment slots.

Annual demand comparison as follows:

Table 1 EHCP assessments

Month	EHCP assessments		Month	EHCP assessment
Oct-20	10		Oct-21	11
Nov-20	23		Nov-21	17
Dec-20	24		Dec-21	36
Jan-21	35		Jan-22	43

Table 2 Children in Care – Initial health assessments

Month	CIC IHA assessments		Month	CIC IHA assessment
Oct-20	15		Oct-21	15
Nov-20	15		Nov-21	32
Dec-20	9		Dec-21	24
Jan-21	16		Jan-22	13

### 3. Nursing workforce

CCS has provided additional investment to increase recruitment to specialist nursing workforce across the service, directly releasing capacity for Paediatricians to review children with more complex health conditions.

Three Nurses have recently commenced their Independent Prescribing course and one nurse will complete the course by April 2022.

For the next performance update caseload numbers and the Nursing impact on service waits will be presented.

### 4. Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) performance

To inform a diagnostic outcome for Children suspected of having an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) an ADOS (Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule) is routinely facilitated. ADOS assessments are not COVID safe due to the face to face requirements and an alternative (BOSA\*) is now in place.

The average wait for BOSA assessments is 33 weeks as at 28<sup>th</sup> January 2022

Table 2: BOSA waiting times

Month	Children waiting	Longest wait (weeks)
Jan-20	76	24
Feb-20	107	29
Mar-20	94	25
Apr-20	112	36
May-20	127	40
Jun-20	135	43
Jul-20	147	46
Aug-20	200	52
Sep-20	214	62
Oct-20	168	62
Nov-20	210	66
Dec-20	236	73
Jan-21	238	77
Feb-21	178	62
Mar-21	203	67
Apr-21	211	71

With additional investment, 300 BOSA assessments pan-Bedfordshire were completed in quarter 3 (21/22)

**To improve waits:**

- A preferred provider has been appointed with the option to increase assessment resource as required.
- Across the service staff members have completed their ADOS training to increase in house capacity.
- New clinical lead is providing Medical peer support to provide clinical outcomes after assessment for all Children.
- A Speech and language Therapist is being recruited to inform diagnostic assessment for pre-school children.

May-21	210	91
June-21	197	77
July-21	221	103
August-21	185	88
Sept 21	157	92
Oct-21	113	43
Nov-21	122	48
Dec-21	115	39
Jan-22	115	37

## 5. Action updates:

### **Recruitment:**

- A new permanent Consultant Paediatrician has been recruited.
- 7 additional Locum Consultant Paediatricians (totalling 5 WTE) working varying hours are in post- fixed term contracts, bank and agency.
- 3 additional Specialist Nurses have been recruited across the Bedfordshire & Luton Services.
- A Speech and Language Therapist is being recruited.
- Joint recruitment with ELFT for a Clinical Psychologist is progressing.
- An agency specialist Nurse is being recruited to support ADHD medication management.

### **RTT waits:**

- A daily Nurse advice line is in place (Monday to Friday).
- Saturday clinics are booked to increase capacity.
- Referral acceptance letters include average wait times and full context on the service status. Letters include community resources for families to access whilst waiting for appointments.
- Referral acceptance letters include average wait times and community resources for families to access whilst waiting for appointments.
- Expedited appointment requests are centrally managed against set criteria.

### **ASD Clinical Pathway:**

- Community health/ CAMHS Link workers are in post to provide post diagnostic support.
- Educational Psychologist evaluation in the ASD diagnostic pathway is expected in the next 6 weeks.
- 2 posts are in place to support children and families whilst waiting for ASD diagnostic assessment.

### **Partnership work to support Children and families:**

- ADHD patient resource pack has been updated with Children and families.
- Post diagnostic resource pack has been launched and shared with system partners.
- BOSA resources have been developed and now accessible via Trust webpages, including a video of what to expect for Children and families.
- A pilot for the self-monitoring of blood pressure and pulse as part of ADHD management continues- 30 families now recruited. Results available in approx. 18 months.
- Monthly forum established with parent carer groups to openly listen and share updates continues.
- Bedford Borough & Central Beds Local Authority Early Years SENS Team participates in triage of referrals.

\*Brief Observation of Symptoms of Autism Schedule Assessments (BOSA)

<https://www.esht.nhs.uk/service/community-paediatrics/autism-assessments/#:~:text=The%20BOSA%20assessment%20includes%3A,are%20observed%20by%20the%20clinician>