

BEDFORDSHIRE COMMUNITY PAEDIATRICS SERVICE
COVID 19 restoration: RTT update
4th October 2021

Key updates within this report:

1. Service performance and trends
2. Factors impacting performance
3. Service improvements
4. Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) performance
5. Actions being taken

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

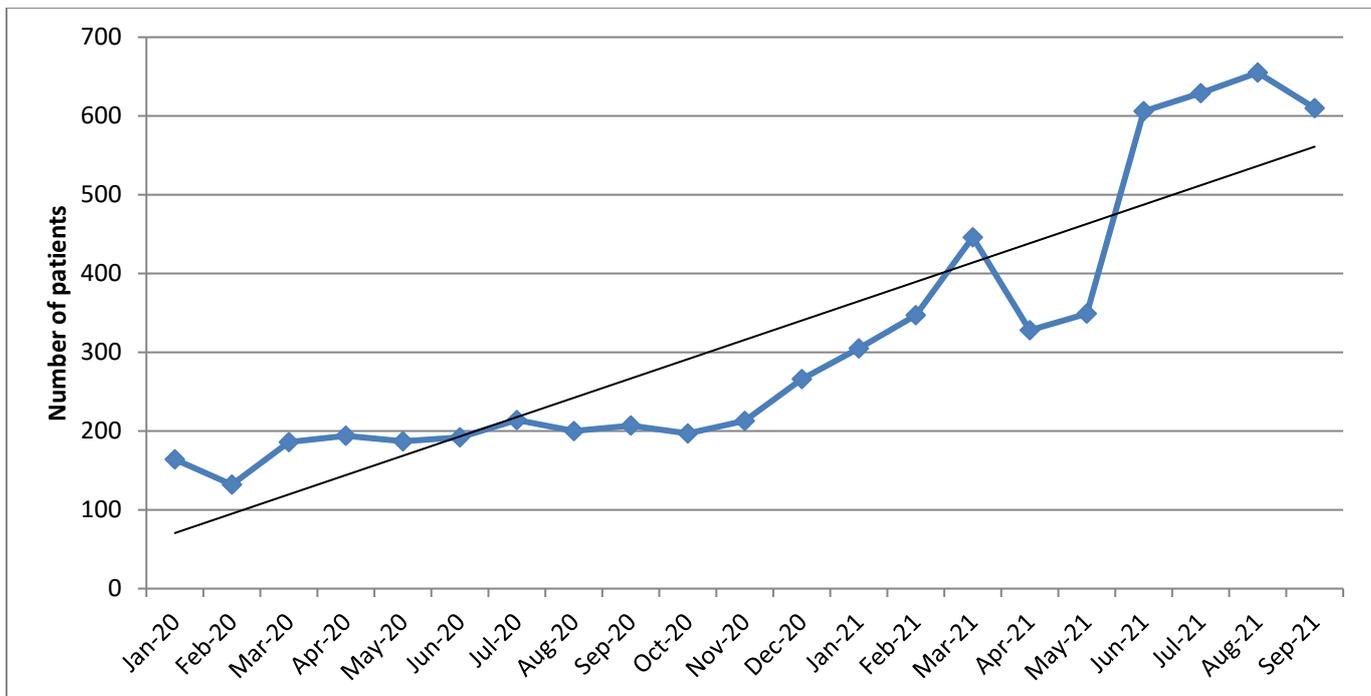
A COVID-19 recovery plan is in place with a Quality Impact Assessment. The service continues to increase the number of face to face appointments with video / telephone consultations available when clinically appropriate. A clinical priority booking system remains in place. A video and literature is available on the CCS website outlining current service offers.

A COVID-19 safe Autism assessment (BOSA* assessment) will remain as a service offer.

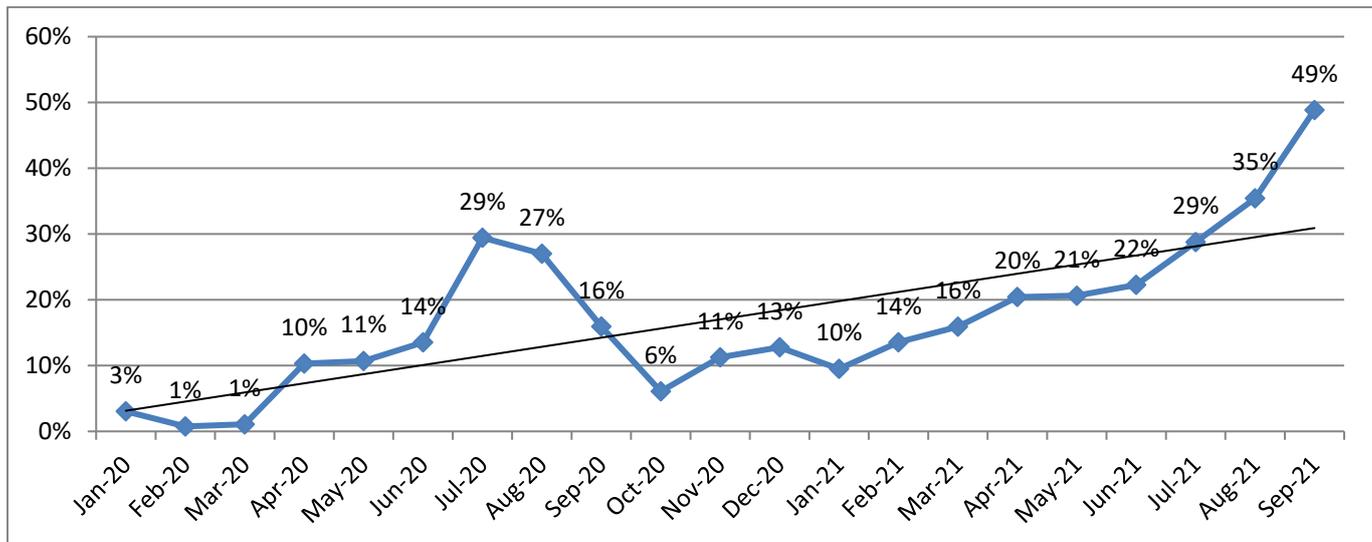
1. Service performance and trends

The average RTT wait is 34 weeks (as of Thursday 16th September 2021).

Graph 1: RTT waits (total number of Children)



Graph 2: 18 week RTT waiting list breaches (up until 16th September 2021)



The number of Children breaching an 18 week wait has increased since July 2021; however the total number of Children waiting is gradually reducing over the past month. A Nurse is on call daily for parents/ carers to access support and advice for children on the waiting list.

Challenges impacting the improvement trajectory:

- Between June and August 2021, the service received a 60% increase in accepted referrals (n=298), in comparison to the same period last year.
- Long term sick leave of a Consultant Paediatrician (from August 2021).
- New agency and locum clinicians secured, however induction and orientation requirements delay waiting list impacts.

Capacity required for routine physical assessments

RTT appointments facilitated over video/ telephone consultations require a face to face physical examination thereafter. These face to face appointments have been phased into capacity planning, however RTT and follow up capacity has reduced as a result.

New appointment 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. School holidays have limited the availability of observation reports over the summer period.

4. Service Improvements

CCS has increased recruitment to the specialist nursing workforce, which will directly release capacity for Paediatricians to review children with more complex health conditions.

3 specialist Nurses have been recruited during September 2021, start date to be confirmed subject to usual pre-employment checks. Two Nurses will their commence prescribing course as soon as possible, one Nurse already has the relevant prescribing qualification.

Table 1 shows a steady increase in the number of children’s ADHD medication reviews managed by specialist nurses currently working in the service.

Table 1 Specialist Nurse Caseloads, including ADHD Medication Reviews

Month	Nurse led ADHD medication reviews
June-21	121
July-21	146
August-21	176
Sept-21	221

The service has achieved a **55% increase** in the number of children seen by Nurses for medication review since June 2021

5. 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.

Table 2: ADOS/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
May-21	210	91
June-21	197	77
July-21	221	103

With additional investment, over 300 BOSA assessments pan-Bedfordshire have been procured and facilitated during August/ September 21.

To further 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 and other members of the clinical team are encouraged to access training as courses become available.
- New in post clinical lead is undertaking review of children with complex presentation, on the ASD pathways, following BOSA assessment and have not progressed to a clinical outcome.

August-21	185	88
Sept 21	157	92

The wait for Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) assessments is 25 weeks on average.

Factors impacting ASD diagnostic performance:

- Limited Multi-disciplinary staff, including Speech & Language Therapists to inform diagnostic assessment for pre-school children.
- School closures over the past year have limited school based assessments and teacher observations.
- Practitioners undertaking BOSA assessments need to be experienced in delivering ADOS assessments. This was not possible during the pandemic, for staff members who had recently completed the ADOS course.

6. Actions

Leadership and recruitment:

- A new part time clinical lead has been appointed across the service.
- 3 Locum Paediatricians now in post- fixed term contracts and bank.
- 3 additional Specialist Nurses have been recruited across the Bedfordshire & Luton Services
- A Speech and Language Therapist is being recruited.

RTT waits:

- Daily Nurse lead advice line is in place (Monday to Friday).
- Saturday clinics are booked to increase capacity as per staff availability.
- Referral acceptance letters include average wait times and full context on the service status. Letters also include community resources for families to access whilst waiting for appointments.
- Referral portal launching October 2021 with Community Paediatrics to improve user experience and maximise administration resource.

ASD Clinical Pathway:

- 3 Increasing Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) trainees are in post.
- 2 Posts are being recruited to support children and families whilst waiting for ASD diagnostic assessment following a successful NHSE bid.

Partnership work to support Children and families:

- ADHD patient resource pack has been updated with Children and families.
- Co-produced diagnostic support pack has been launched and shared with system partners, abstract recently published in BMJ* and discussions planned with NHSEI to scope suitability as a national resource
- BOSA resources have been developed and now accessible via Trust webpages, including a video of what to expect for Children and families.
- Monthly forum established with parent carer groups to openly listen and share updates continues.

*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>

*(Article 1800)

https://adc.bmj.com/content/archdischild/106/Suppl_1/A493.2.full.pdf

https://adc.bmj.com/content/106/Suppl_1/A493.2