

FOI 4039

Adult Neurodevelopmental Services

**1. Describe your service and what you offer (e.g. autism diagnostic service; neurodevelopmental support service).**

The Northern Trust does not have a commissioned service for Adult ADHD assessment or treatment.

The Northern Trust's Adult Autism Service is a Trust wide service for adults aged 18+ who experience difficulties in their lives linked with autism. The service aims to help autistic adults identify their differences and find helpful ways of coping. The service provides diagnostic assessment and brief psycho-educational interventions.

The service co-facilitates workshops with adults with lived experience of autism via the Recovery College.

The service co-facilitates the Northern Adult Autism Advisory Service (NAAAS) with partners from statutory and voluntary & community groups. Advice and signposting to appropriate services is provided to autistic individuals aged 16+ years, partners, parents, carers and other professionals.

**2. Describe your triage process (e.g. separate referrals management team, paper screening of referrals by core team, initial screening assessments offered to clients).**

The Northern Trust Adult Autism Service accepts referrals from health care professionals. These referrals are reviewed by the service lead/clinical staff as appropriate, to determine eligibility for the service. After reviewing the referral, a decision is made whether to accept, reject or redirect the referral, dependent on the information provided by the referral agent. At times, additional information is sought from the referrer or service user. A review of information held on the person's electronic HSC care record (encompass) may also be completed in order to assist the decision on suitability for the service.

Referrals for intervention must be accompanied by documentary evidence that the individual has undergone a formal diagnostic assessment and the autism diagnosis has been confirmed. The request for intervention must focus on autism specific difficulties.

**3. How many people are currently awaiting diagnostic assessment (as of April 2026)?**

Total waiters for an Autism Diagnostic Assessment: 1679

**4. What is the maximum waiting time for diagnostic assessment?**

Longest wait for an Autism Diagnostic Assessment: 1661 days.

**5.What percentage of referral were declined between April 2023-April 2026 and for what reason (common themes)?**

The Northern Trust is not able to report on the numbers of declined referrals for the Adult Autism Service between April 2023 and 6 November 2024 due to data quality issues on the previously used electronic patient record system.

Between 7 November 2024 and 31 March 2026, 4.87% of diagnostic referrals were rejected by the Adult Autism Service.

Common themes for declining referrals:

- Duplicate referrals.
- Ineligible for service or inappropriate referrals for service (e.g. request for ADHD assessment, supported living request) or there were no autism specific difficulties reported on in the referral.

**6.How many complaints were received between April 2023-April 2026 (describe common themes)?**

Between April 2023 and April 2026, the Adult Autism Service received 12 complaints. Common themes relate to waiting times for the service.

**7.What framework do you use for diagnostic assessment? (e.g. following NICE and/or AQAS guidelines).**

The Northern Trust Adult Autism Service follows NICE guidelines as a framework for diagnostic assessment.

**8.Do you offer pre and/or post diagnostic interventions (if so which)?**

Pre-Autism diagnosis service users are directed to the Northern Region Recovery College educational workshops, Stress Control NI and Northern Adult Autism Advisory Service (NAAAS).

Post-Autism diagnosis service users may be signposted to NAAAS & the Recovery College or other voluntary & community services or statutory services as appropriate. The Adult Autism Service provides brief psychoeducational intervention sessions in a variety of areas, dependent on need.

**9.If ADHD medication treatments (initiation and titration) are offered, what local arrangements do you have in place for shared care?**

The Northern Trust does not have a commissioned service for Adult ADHD assessment or treatment.



**10. What is your staffing model? (mdt members, admin)**

The Northern Trust does not have a commissioned service for Adult ADHD assessment or treatment.

The staffing model for the Northern Trust Adult Autism Service is multidisciplinary. The service is led by a Clinical Psychologist and the team of ASD Practitioners come from a variety of professional backgrounds including Social Work, Speech and Language Therapy, Nursing and Psychology staff. Admin staff support the clinical team.