

20th October 2026

Eastbourne District General Hospital

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Further to your recent request for information made under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000, I now set out our answers to your specific questions, and any clarifications sought and provided, as follows:

Could you please provide the following for the CYP autism assessment pathway:

- 1) The number of children and young people currently on the waiting list for an autism assessment.**

As of 1 October 2026, the number of children on the waiting list for an autism assessment at East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust (ESHT) was 1,828.

Please note that the autism assessment service provided by ESHT is for children up to the age of 11.

- 2) The average (mean) and median waiting time, in weeks, from referral to first assessment appointment, for the most recent 12 months for which data is available.**

Month	Average (Mean) Waiting Time (Weeks)	Median Waiting Time (Weeks)
September 2025	59	60
October 2025	68	71
November 2025	80	79
December 2025	80	92
January 2026	75	88
February 2026	75	84
March 2026	74	73
April 2026	72	80
May 2026	71	77
June 2026	62	61
July 2026	67	69
August 2026	68	75

These figures reflect first appointments for those children seen by ESHT and also those seen by our outsourcing provider.

3) The average (mean) and median waiting time, in weeks, from first assessment appointment to a diagnostic outcome, for the same period.

East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust does not centrally record the average waiting times from first assessment appointment to a diagnostic outcome. In order to calculate the average and median waiting times, in weeks, from first appointment to a diagnostic outcome, there would need to be a manual review of every child's health record to collect this information, then calculate the waiting time in each case, and then calculate the average and median waiting times by month for all children seen, which we estimate would take in excess of 18 hours. We are therefore applying Section 12(1) to this part of your request.

Section 12(1) of the Act allows a public authority to refuse to comply with a request for information if the authority estimates that the cost of compliance would exceed the 'appropriate limit', as defined by the Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004 (the Regulations). These state that this cost limit is £450 for public authorities which are not part of central government or the armed forces. The costs are calculated at £25 per hour per person regardless of the rate of pay, which means that the limit will be exceeded if the work involved would exceed 18 hours. The Trust estimates that the cost of complying with this request would significantly exceed the above limit.

4) Whether these figures are published anywhere on an ongoing basis (e.g. a public dashboard or board report), and if so, a link to that source.

ESHT does not currently publish these figures.

If it would reduce the burden of responding, monthly or quarterly figures covering the same period are equally useful, and I'm happy to receive this as a spreadsheet or raw data export rather than a formatted report.

I trust this information is helpful in its detail or explanation however, if you are dissatisfied with the response, then you have the right to request an internal review. If you wish to seek an internal review, please write to the Freedom of Information Team at esh-tr.foi@nhs.net quoting the above FOI reference number, within 40 working days. Please note the Trust is not obliged to accept a request for an internal review after this time period.

Yours faithfully

Freedom of Information (FOI) Team
East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust
0300 131 4716
Core Hours of Business: Monday to Friday 9.00am to 4.00pm