

# **What is a Neurodevelopmental Clinical Assessment?**

In the next section you will find information about the neurodevelopmental assessment pathway. This new assessment pathway provides a more streamlined assessment process to consider whether a child or young person meets the clinical diagnostic criteria for Autism or ADHD or whether there is another explanation for their presentation and current difficulties.

The assessment pathway includes several steps from initial information gathering through to diagnostic assessments and ultimately feedback to children or young people and their families.

## **Information Gathering**

Before meeting with the child or young person and their parents, the neurodevelopmental assessment team will make sure they have access to all the historical information about the child or young person. This will include requesting information from partner agencies such as speech and language therapy, paediatrics, school, Specialist SEND and Inclusion services/Educational Psychology.

## **Comprehensive Initial Assessment**

Each child or young person will be allocated a Lead Clinician who will conduct the initial assessment with parents. This will be a thorough assessment, including developmental history, social history, a clear picture of the current presenting difficulties and it will screen for additional difficulties such as mental health problems, learning difficulties, trauma, and attachment. If the child is old enough to engage, they will be also offered an initial appointment to hear their story. All children and young people will also be observed in school or in a group situation unless this has already been undertaken by an appropriate professional.

For some children or young people, it will become apparent following the initial assessment that a specialist assessment is not appropriate at that time. The child or young person will be discharged from the pathway with a formulation (a better understanding) of their presenting difficulties and a plan for appropriate support and intervention that will be shared with the referrer.

## **Multi-disciplinary Assessment Planning**

Once the initial assessment is complete, the child or young person's presentation will be discussed in a multi-disciplinary team. A specialist assessment will then be planned, depending on the complexity of the child or young person's difficulties. For many children and young people, this is likely to be quite a brief assessment, focussed in on either Autism or ADHD, as other possible explanations of the presenting difficulty have been ruled out. However, for children and young people who are presenting with a combination of difficulties, the assessment will include more components, so that their difficulties can be fully explored and understood.

## **Detailed Neurodevelopmental Assessment**

Families will be provided with an assessment planning letter, with the components of the assessment outlined with appointment times. A provisional date for formulation (a better shared understanding) appointment will also be included in the assessment planning letter. The multi-disciplinary team will then conduct the components of the specialist assessment.

## **Multi-disciplinary Diagnostic Discussion**

The information from the neurodevelopmental assessment will be discussed within the MDT. A theory is developed that keeps the child or young person's presenting problems at the centre and includes a broad picture of their strengths and difficulties. The diagnostic criteria for Autism, ADHD or both are considered at this point.

## **Formulation**

The outcome of the MDT discussion is shared with the family and the final formulation is developed together at this time. The referrer will be invited to attend part of this meeting and they will then be able to share the outcome with school. The outcome of the assessment is documented in a written report and shared with all the relevant parties. This final report will include a plan for how the broader support system will continue to support the child or young person considering any additional information.

## **Discharge from Neurodevelopmental Service**

Once the assessment is complete, all children and young people will be discharged from the Neurodevelopmental Assessment Pathway. If additional mental health needs are identified, or if there is on-going medical treatment for ADHD, they will be transferred to TEWV CAMHS to provide this.

### Referral Form

- Completed by a professional alongside parents.
- Forms will be screened by the co-ordinator and further information requested if needed.

### Neurodevelopmental Pathway Panel

- Completed forms are discussed by a multi-agency information sharing panel and the child or young person's needs are considered.

Diagnostic assessment not appropriate

### Comprehensive Initial Assessment

- Interview with parents, including differential assessment.
- Observation of child or young person, either in school or in a group.
- Outcome discussed within the team, and if indicated, specialist assessment is planned.

Diagnostic assessment not appropriate

### Detailed Neurodevelopmental Assessment

- Neurodevelopmental assessment components depending on the needs of each child or young person.
- Timetable of planned appointments shared with parents.

### Multi-disciplinary Diagnostic Discussion

- Information from the specialist assessment is discussed and considered against the diagnostic criteria for Autism and/or ADHD.

### Formulation Meeting

- Outcome of multi-disciplinary diagnostic discussion shared with parents (and young person).
- Final formulation and recommendations are co-produced.

### Discharge

- Comprehensive report shared with all relevant parties.
- Transferred to CAMHS if ongoing intervention required.

Ongoing support and intervention

SUPPORT OFFER