



Neurodevelopmental Pathway - Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

The Neurodevelopmental Pathway team have been reviewing service delivery as part of the transformation programme in light of ever-increasing demand. The service continues to receive an unprecedented high number of referrals.

In response, we are changing the way in which we receive referrals. The patient journey is at the heart of what we do. We therefore need to ensure we receive appropriate referrals and encourage early intervention for children/young people with additional needs to ensure they are directed to the most appropriate pathway.

1. Changes to the way we receive referrals:

We are changing the criteria for referrers by encouraging a system where children and young people receive early intervention and support prior to referral.

This change will be implemented with the launch of a new electronic portal supporting how information is received and shared. We are launching this in mid-April 2024. With this new system, referrers will need to evidence that children have received a minimum of 6 months or two school terms of support (graduated approach) for their needs. If this support is not in place the child's referral will not be accepted. This is in line with other regional and national NHS ASD assessment providers.

There will be an expectation that all schools and settings support children in Birmingham as part of a graduated approach to meeting needs.

There are currently three stages of intervention in the graduated approach. For further information please visit: www.localofferbirmingham.co.uk:

- firstly, additional support provided by schools themselves, some schools and settings call this SEN Support, others may call it something different
- secondly, additional support by the school, together with the advice or involvement of external agencies providing a package of support. This stage is known as SEN Support by all schools
- thirdly, an Education Health Care Needs Assessment (EHCNA) can be carried out through a range of agencies for children and young people with complex needs. This will establish what the provision should be to meet those needs, if an EHCP is needed or if the child/young person's (CYP) needs can be met at SEN Support level.

Depending on a child's needs, this support may include:

- work with a teaching assistant
- differentiating tasks (i.e. making tasks simpler or tailoring them to a child's ability)
- offering different ways of recording information (e.g. labelling pictures, diagrams or flow-charts)
- using multi-sensory activities
- breaking down learning into small manageable steps
- helping children to organise their written work by using writing frames
- allowing extra time to complete tasks
- keeping instructions short and clear
- constantly praising and encouraging the child for achievements made

Support for a child/young person's difficulties may also be provided outside or in addition to the school setting, but in relation to the reason for referral, such as:

- Early Help Support
- Social Care support
- Birmingham Communication and Autism Team
- Speech and Language Therapy
- Occupational Therapy
- SEND Support
- Community Paediatrics
- Early Years Inclusion Service (EYIS)
- Mental health and wellbeing support from services such as – the Screening, Training, Intervention, Consultation and Knowledge (STICK) team, Forward Thinking Birmingham (FTB) or the Living Well Consortium
- Educational Psychology

If the child/young person has received some support that is not noted above and you need to clarify whether the intervention is appropriate you can contact the clinical team to discuss on the NDP Advice Line: 0121 466 6825.

Further information on the Neurodevelopmental Pathway for referrers and families is available on our webpage: [Neurodevelopmental Pathway \(NDP\), | Website \(bhamcommunity.nhs.uk\)](https://www.bhamcommunity.nhs.uk/neurodevelopmental-pathway)

All other existing referral criteria will remain in place, including:

- Children aged 2.5 – 16 years, or 19 if the young person is at a special school
- Registered with a Birmingham GP
- Has not received a previous ASD diagnosis from either an NHS or private provider

2. Launch of One Portal

One Portal is a cutting edge and forward-thinking digital system to support referral management within the NDP. The system has undergone rigorous testing by all stakeholders before the system goes live in mid-April 2024.

One Portal has been designed to further streamline and improve the ASD assessment pathway for referring professionals and families, as all information, not just the referral, will now be gathered through One Portal.

The new upcoming portal will support our efforts in ensuring we receive appropriate referrals by:

- supporting early identification of high priority referrals
- supporting early rejection of inappropriate referrals
- allowing the submission of qualitative information to support referrals

As a referrer you will need to refer any child to the ASD assessment pathway through the new One Portal system. The process is similar to the way referrals are currently made following the launch of the Electronic Referral Form in January 2023. All referrals made prior to One Portal going live will be transferred to the One Portal system.