

Autism Spectrum Disorder: recognition, referral and diagnosis for children from 4 years to 18 years with a learning disability

What is the Community Learning Disability Team (CLDT) Autism Spectrum Disorder Assessment pathway?

The aim of the pathway is to provide a coordinated diagnostic process for children and young people who have a learning disability.

Recognition

Children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) develop at a different rate and may not develop skills in the same order as typically developing children.

If you have concerns about your child's development please contact your health visitor or GP who will discuss with you whether your child should be referred for an assessment.

Diagnostic assessment

Diagnostic assessment is available for children aged from 4 years old to 18 years who have a diagnosed learning disability.

Your child will be allocated a lead professional from our ASD Assessment Pathway Team, this may be a nurse or a clinical psychologist. They will meet with you to explain the process and complete a full developmental history with you. Once this is complete we will arrange school/college observations for your child, on at least two occasions.

We will gather a range of appropriate reports on your child from our speech and language therapists, occupational therapists and paediatricians etc. We may also complete an Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule assessment (ADOS), which is a play based assessment undertaken in the child's school or a clinic setting.

You and your child/young person will also be seen by our consultant psychiatrist who will complete an assessment to feed back into the 'Pathway Case' discussion.

Once all the assessment work has been completed we will meet with you to discuss the outcome and agree who needs to see it. For example your GP, school or agencies who support your child.

What happens if your child is diagnosed with ASD?

If your child is diagnosed with ASD you will be provided with an information pack detailing local and national support services.

You will be offered to take part in the [cygnet parent programme](#) run by North Tyneside Council's Language and Communication Team with help from our community learning disability and speech and language teams. This is a Barnardo's programme aimed to empower and help parents/carers to support their child's social communication and appropriate behaviour.

Post Diagnosis

Children with a diagnosed learning disability and ASD can access support from CLDT to help with a range of health needs, including; psychiatry, psychology, specialist behaviour nursing and mental health and wellbeing.