



**Northumbria Healthcare**  
NHS Foundation Trust

# Autism spectrum disorder pathway

Issued by the paediatrics department

## Why is my child being offered this appointment?

Your child is already under the care of a paediatrician and speech and language therapist for concerns relating to their language and social communication development. The professionals working with your child have explained that the difficulties your child is experiencing may be explained by a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder.

## What should I expect from the process?

You will initially be seen by a paediatrician to discuss your child's development and their abilities. You may have already been asked these questions but it is important to gain a better understanding of your child. It would be helpful to bring information about your child's development milestones with you e.g. when they first walked, first word etc.

After being seen by the paediatrician your child will be seen by a speech and language therapist who will visit you at home and will observe your child in a childcare/nursery setting. The speech and language therapist will assess your child and will ask you how they communicate, what they can understand and how they play. These assessments are carried out at home and in your child's nursery setting through play interaction.

The assessment will be carried out by a speech and language therapist who specialises in Autism Spectrum Disorder diagnosis. Your child can continue to receive review assessments and support from their existing speech and language therapist during the ASD pathway process.

## Joint communication clinic

After these assessments have taken place you will be seen in clinic by the paediatrician and the speech and language therapist who you have already met. There may also be other health professionals at this appointment such as staff from portage or occupational therapists. This appointment is to share and discuss all the information gathered and to see whether there is enough evidence to provide your child with a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder.

## Post diagnosis appointment

We know that receiving a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder can be overwhelming at first. Therefore, if your child receives this diagnosis you will be offered a further appointment to discuss the diagnosis and to answer any questions you might have.

You will be offered a phone appointment, face-to face or group appointment depending on the area you live in.

It is good to think of any questions you would like answered before attending this appointment. These could be questions about Autism Spectrum Disorder or about managing certain aspects of your child's condition (for example, their sensory needs).

If you have any further questions you can contact the service on 01670 564030.

## Alternative Formats

If you would like a copy of this information in large print, another language, audio tape or other format please call the Contact Centre on 03 44 811 8118.

## Other sources of information

### NHS 111

### NHS Choices

[www.nhs.uk/pages/homepage.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/pages/homepage.aspx)

### NICE (National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence)

[www.nice.org.uk](http://www.nice.org.uk)

### Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

Freephone: 0800 032 0202

Text: 07815 500015

Email: [northoftynepals@nhct.nhs.uk](mailto:northoftynepals@nhct.nhs.uk)

### Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust

General Enquiries 03 44 811 8111

[www.northumbria.nhs.uk](http://www.northumbria.nhs.uk)

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