

# **Neurodevelopmental Pathway (NDP) Halton, Warrington and Cheshire West**

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

This document aims to answer questions regarding the neurodevelopmental pathway (NDP) for the assessment of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and Autism.

## **1. What is the Neurodevelopmental Pathway (NDP)?**

The NDP is a diagnostic process in which children and young people are assessed for neurodevelopmental conditions of either attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and/or Autism.

## **2. Who is the Neurodevelopmental Pathway (NDP) team?**

The NDP team are qualified and non-qualified staff who are experienced in the assessment and/or diagnosis of neurodevelopmental conditions. The team will complete assessments guided by national guidelines and local pathways.

If you are attending for an Autism assessment you may see one or both of these clinicians:

- A Community Paediatrician
- A Speech and Language Therapist

If you are attending for an ADHD assessment you may see one or both of these clinicians:

- A Community Paediatrician
- A Healthcare Assistant for Qb testing, if required

The NDP team may request relevant information from other services that may be involved with your child or young person including early years practitioners, health visitors, school nurses, teachers, educational psychologists and child and young person mental health services (CYPMHS).

## **3. I think my child or young person might have Autism or ADHD, what should I do?**

If you are starting to notice signs that your child or young person may have Autism or ADHD, there are several steps you should take.

Initially, parents and carers should seek information about the differences that people with Autism or ADHD may present with. You can do this by clicking the following links to trusted NHS information:

Autism: [Autism - NHS](#)

ADHD: [ADHD in children and young people - NHS](#)

Additionally, you may wish to contact your local SEND parent/carer forums for advice and support:

Halton: [www.haltionsendcarersforum.org.uk/](http://www.haltionsendcarersforum.org.uk/)  
Warrington: [www.warrpac.org](http://www.warrpac.org)  
West Cheshire: [www.pcfcheshirewest.org](http://www.pcfcheshirewest.org)

After you have explored these services, you may wish to contact the 0-19 Service, your child's nursery worker or your child or young person's Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) at school for further guidance and discussion. This is known as a graduated approach and local support services should be explored and accessed before any referrals to the NDP are submitted.

If, after exploring these resources, you or the professional feels that your child or young person needs to be referred for an assessment then it is recommended that you **complete the referral together**. Input from people who know your child or young person in different settings is crucial to ensure a comprehensive and informative referral is made.

#### **4. My child or young person isn't in school – how can I refer them?**

For children not currently in an educational setting, you can complete a referral form with Early Help, your Health Visitor, or SENDIASS. Evidence from other settings — such as group activities, sports clubs, or individual tutors — can also be submitted.

#### **5. Can my GP make a referral for my child or young person?**

Simply put, no! It is important to note that referrals from GPs are not accepted as they do not have the detailed observations required to inform the referral process.

#### **6. How long will it take to hear back about my referral?**

The NDP team aim to look at all the referrals received within 12 weeks. However, we apologise to anyone who is experiencing longer wait times than expected and acknowledge that this can be distressing. The service is receiving extremely high numbers of referrals which is responsible for the delay.

Once the referral has been received, the NDP team will screen/triage the information provided to ensure that it meets the national criteria for acceptance.

If your child or young person's referral does not meet the standards then the referral will not be accepted. However, the NDP team will provide you with a letter of explanation and will signpost you and your child or young person to appropriate local services for support.

## **7. What happens after my child or young person is accepted for assessment?**

Your child or young person will follow the NDP which is a 5-stage process:

- Stage 1 - Referral
- Stage 2 - Screening/Triage
- Stage 3 - Assessment
- Stage 4 - Outcome
- Stage 5 - Support

## **8. What happens in an assessment?**

If your child or young person has been referred for either ADHD or Autism, the NDP team will request further information in addition to the referral. This information may include a school/nursery observation report, details of developmental history or any other available reports from professionals in services that your child or young person may be involved with such as Educational Psychology or Child and Young People Mental Health Service (CYPMHS).

Specifically for ADHD assessments, your child may be requested to attend for a Qb Test. A Qb Test is an evidence-based and objective test which is officially called a Quantitative Behavioural objective computerised assessment.

It is important to recognise there is no existing diagnostic medical test such as blood test or scan to diagnose ADHD or Autism.

Specifically for Autism assessments, a speech and language therapist (SLT) will assess your child or young person's social communication skills.

The SLT will have a discussion with your child or young person. They complete activities and will listen and observe your child or young person's communication style and will make notes throughout the appointment.

In most circumstances the SLT assessment will be completed via a face-to-face appointment with your child or young person without their parent/carer present in the room. The SLT will invite you to provide information about your child or young person.

Your child or young person may also need to be assessed by a doctor. Depending on the age of your child or young person, the doctor will ask a number of questions about their past and present medical and developmental history. The doctor may need to physically examine your child or young person.

For children or young people referred for assessment of ADHD, the doctor may provide an outcome at the end of the assessment. If a positive diagnosis of ADHD is given the doctor will measure their height, weight and blood pressure in anticipation of commencing medications and a consent form will be discussed and completed.

If you wish to speak privately with our clinicians, about your child or young person before the assessment commences please do let us know on the day so that we can facilitate this for you. Please ensure that you bring with you a suitable person who can supervise your child or, if required, young person.

## **9. How is a diagnosis decided?**

The outcome of the assessment for both Autism and ADHD will take account of all information provided from different environments including home and educational settings as well as from other key professionals that may be involved.

Specifically for Autism a multidisciplinary team (MDT) meeting will take place where the outcome will be agreed. If an outcome cannot be agreed, the MDT will instead agree next steps which may include a request for further assessments to be completed such as an Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule (ADOS). Once all reports have been received the MDT will review again and decide an outcome which may be diagnosis or non-diagnosis of Autism.

For ADHD, the clinician will assess the child in clinic and consider all the information provided about the child including the results of the Qb Test. The clinician will then be able to provide an outcome which may be diagnosis or non-diagnosis of ADHD. If the clinician is uncertain if the child has ADHD, then they may request further information to help them to confirm the outcome.

## **10. What do I do if I do not agree with the outcome?**

If the parent/carer/young person is not in agreement with the outcome there is a process whereby this can be reviewed to ensure a robust assessment has been carried out. This process includes consideration of any new information if this has been provided. We refer to this as the paediatric neurodevelopmental multidisciplinary assessment – review of the outcome procedure.

Should this apply to you, please email the NDP team with details about your request for a review of your child or young person's outcome. Be sure to include any additional information that may not have been previously considered such as an educational psychology report.

Halton and Cheshire West:  
Warrington:

[bchft.haltonndpenquiries@nhs.net](mailto:bchft.haltonndpenquiries@nhs.net)  
[bchft.ndpwarringtonenquiries@nhs.net](mailto:bchft.ndpwarringtonenquiries@nhs.net)

## **11. What happens if my child or young person does not get a diagnosis?**

You and your child or young person will be signposted to appropriate support and services whether the outcome of the assessment is a formal diagnosis or not.

The support will be based on recommendations provided by clinicians as part of the outcome process.

Health, education, and social care services should not wait for a formal diagnosis to provide support such as making reasonable adjustments, adopting a graduated approach or completing Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP).

## **12. What support is available after a diagnosis?**

Following a diagnosis of ADHD or Autism, your child or young person will be automatically referred to our Neurodevelopmental Nursing Team (NDNT) and you, as their parent or carer, will need to 'opt in' to be offered a place on a workshop that reflects their diagnosis. If you choose not to 'opt in' for the workshop straight after diagnosis you can self-refer into the service at a time you would like to attend in the future.

If your child or young person's diagnosis is ADHD and is prescribed medication, then they will be offered an annual review by one of our doctors or Specialist ADHD nurses. You will also meet with our healthcare assistant to have your child or young person's height, weight and blood pressure measured at regular intervals.

Our nurses can support with behaviour and can work with you on strategies to support you as a family. This offer is available to anyone with an ADHD and/or Autism diagnosis.

The NDNT also provide workshops for management of sleep and can offer individual support for you, your child or young person.

Additionally, you may wish to contact your local SEND parent/carers forums for advice and support:

Halton: [www.haltosendcarersforum.org.uk/](http://www.haltosendcarersforum.org.uk/)

Warrington: [www.warrpac.org](http://www.warrpac.org)

Cheshire West: [www.pcfcheshirewest.org/](http://www.pcfcheshirewest.org/)

## **13. Information about Private Assessments**

### **My child or young person has been privately assessed for ADHD and/or Autism, what do I do now?**

If your child or young person has received a positive diagnosis, you will have received a report confirming the diagnosis of ADHD or Autism. If you wish to have this officially recorded by the NHS, you will be required to send a copy of the report to the NDP team who will add it to the waiting list for a clinician to review.

Halton and Cheshire West: [bchft.haltonndpenquiries@nhs.net](mailto:bchft.haltonndpenquiries@nhs.net)  
Warrington: [bchft.ndpwarringtonenquiries@nhs.net](mailto:bchft.ndpwarringtonenquiries@nhs.net)

Where there is clear evidence that the assessment and diagnosis was made in line with the national guidelines, the findings of the assessment and any subsequent diagnosis will be considered in the same way as an assessment commissioned from the NHS. Importantly we require evidence of a multidisciplinary approach to the assessment.

Please be aware that a private ADHD diagnosis can result in your child or young person requiring medications. If the private assessment and diagnosis of ADHD do not meet the required national standards then the NHS will not be able to prescribe medications for your child or young person. It should be noted that prescriptions for ADHD medications that sit outside of the NHS will be costly and would therefore, be funded by parents or carers.

The NHS and Local Authority in your area is not responsible for the quality assurance of independent providers who offer Autism or ADHD assessments and is therefore unable to recommend specific organisations to do this.

If there are concerns about the quality of a private assessment, these should be reported directly to the Care Quality Commission, who are the independent regulator of health and social care in England.

|   |
|---|
| Contributors include:                                 |
| Bridgewater Community Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust |
| Halton and Warrington SEND parent/carers forums       |
| 19.11.2025  |