



About AUTISM

Information for families recently referred for an assessment

Purpose of this leaflet

This leaflet has been prepared to offer information to families with a child or young person who has recently been referred for an autism assessment in the Bradford and Craven District. It will give information about the process and support available whilst waiting for the assessment to be completed.

What is Autism?

Autism is a life long developmental condition affecting social, communication and imagination skills. People with autism share a common difficulty in making sense of the world. The degree to which they are affected varies, but they commonly have difficulties in the following areas:

- With social relationships
- With verbal communication
- With non-verbal communication
- In the development of play and imagination
- Resistance to change in routine
- With sensory issues

What is ADHD?

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder is a lifelong condition. The 3 main characteristics of ADHD are:

- Inattention – individuals find it difficult to concentrate and remember information.
- Hyperactivity – individuals have a lot of energy and seem constantly on the move. This can lead to poor sleep.
- Impulsivity – refers to acting without thinking first. People with symptoms of impulsivity are often impatient with waiting their turn or waiting in line.

The Assessment Process in the Bradford and Craven District – Where and Who

For Autism:

If a child is under 12 years old they will often be seen initially by a paediatrician (a doctor who manages medical conditions affecting infants, children and young people). If your child shows some signs of autism or ADHD the paediatrician will refer to the local autism multi-disciplinary team (MDT). Alternatively your child may be referred to the autism assessment service by your GP, health visitor, school nurse or your schools' Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator. If your child is over 12 years old they will be referred to the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) team for the area where you live for an assessment.

Assessments for autism take place in these locations across the district:

- **Child Development Centres:**
 - Airedale Hospital in Steeton
 - St Luke's Hospital Bradford
- **CAMHS teams:**
 - Bradford
 - Keighley

For ADHD:

Assessments for ADHD for children and young people are provided by CAMHS who undertake assessments for children between 7 and 18 years. In severe cases, children between 5 and 7 years may also be appropriate for an ADHD assessment, but the referrer would need to discuss with a member of the neurodevelopmental team prior to making the referral.

Waiting lists for assessments and length of wait

There is a waiting list for each of the services mentioned above and the length of time you will wait for the assessment will vary depending on the demand for that service in your geographical area. We appreciate that you may have seen various professionals before being referred for an autism assessment and we can understand this can be a challenging time.

Autism assessment is highly specialised and complex often involving paediatricians, psychologists, psychiatrists, speech and language therapists (SALT), nurses and education staff. The increasing childhood population in Bradford and Craven has heightened awareness of the need for assessments and this has increased demand and led to longer waiting times in most areas. The three local providers and CCG are working collaboratively to increase capacity and reduce waiting times.

***Support is available to you whilst you wait for the assessment.
Details appears later in this leaflet***

The Assessment Process explained

Autism or ADHD assessments - information will be gathered from both home and school/nursery. Parents/carers will be asked about how the child/young person presented themselves throughout their life so far and will look at important events in their lives. Prior to the assessment appointment it may be helpful to look through the baby books you kept to remind you of how they were as an infant and when they met their “developmental milestones”. You may also like to think about the reasons why you first became concerned about your child and any day to day examples of what your child found difficult.

School and/or nursery will be asked how the child presented there and our staff will sometimes speak to someone at the school who knows the child well. If you know someone who would be good to speak to about this please do let our staff know. Children can “mask” their difficulties at school and so its important to consider this along with the school information. An observation of your child may be carried out at school and this will be completed by one of our staff who your child will not know and the child will not be aware that s/he is being observed.

Other Assessments that may be carried out dependent on whether your child is being assessed for ASD/ADHD or both. *See sample flow chart below*

ADOS – (stands for Autism Diagnosis Observation Schedule) and is a tool used in an autism assessment. For younger children this is based around play. If the child is older and able, a different module may be used which is based around conversations. The tool uses an assessment against specific criteria to help reach a diagnosis.

Q.B. test - is a computer based test that objectively measures the three core symptoms of ADHD; activity, inattention and impulsivity. Your child's test result is compared with children of the same age and gender, who have ADHD and those who do not.

Speech and Language test – is sometimes referred to as SALT and carried out by a Speech and Language therapist who conducts their own specialised assessment. This can help to understand better the child's strengths and difficulties in communication.

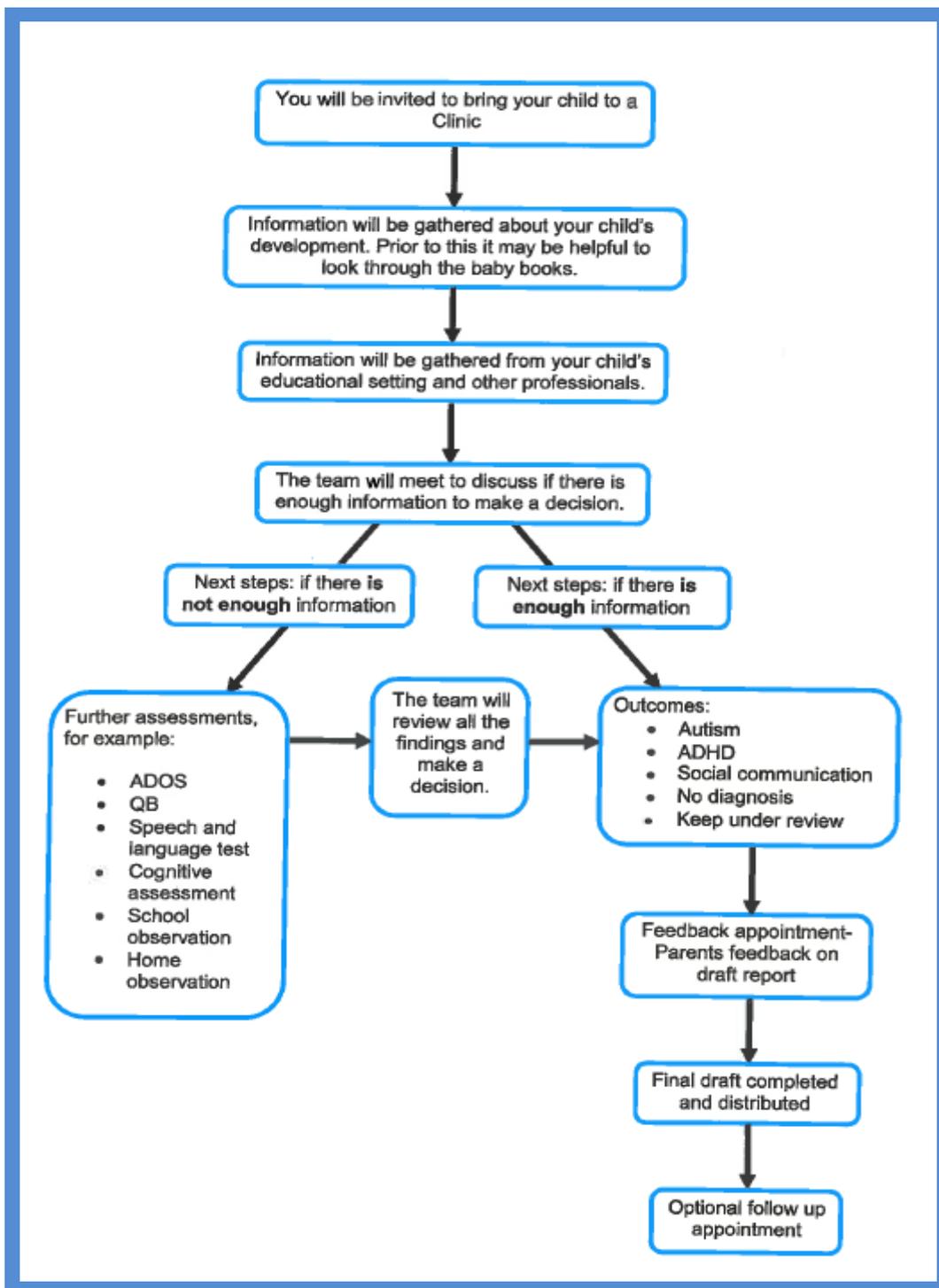
Cognitive Assessment – identifies what your child's strengths and difficulties are in relation to the processes of thinking and reasoning through thought, experience and the senses. Exploring this can also help enhance understanding of your child.

Home Observations – One of the team members may ask to come and meet you and the child at home. This will also help to develop a picture of the child's strengths and difficulties.

Multi-disciplinary Team Review (known as an MDT) – When the professionals involved feel that they have collected sufficient information the child will be discussed within an MDT meeting. During the discussion the assessments that have been carried out are discussed in terms of diagnostic criteria. The team will discuss what might be helpful for the child going forward.

SAMPLE OF A FLOW CHART FOR ASSESSMENT

Please note not all parts of the process take place face to face. We may use telephone or video session to undertake some or all parts of the assessment.



What Happens next in the process – Signposting and support

At the end of the assessment and when the professionals feel they have sufficient information to make a diagnosis you will be given detailed feedback of the findings either face to face or over the telephone and the reasoning will be explained. You will be given advice on what will best help your child and you will receive information about services available and things that may be helpful for your child, yourself and your family.

Our report will then be written based on the assessments and you will be given a draft report to check and we will ask you to get in touch if you would like clarification or any amendments to be made. Once you are happy, we will send the final report to you, your GP, school and to other professionals involved in your child's care. The list of people we will send copies to will be shown in the draft for your approval..

Please Note: *You have received this Patient Information Leaflet now because you have been referred for an autism assessment and we hope this information will be useful to you during your wait for an appointment. When your child reaches the top of the waiting list for the service you have been referred to they will be in touch with you with details of your appointment.*

Support available to you whilst you wait for the assessment

DIVA Bradford <https://divabradford.org.uk/> brings together information on voluntary and community sector groups from across Bradford District in a single searchable directory. On the site (see below) you can enter the subject you are looking for e.g. autism” and postcode or district and it will show details of support in your area.

The screenshot shows the DIVA Bradford website interface. At the top, there are navigation links: Home, About, Jobs, Events, Find a community group, and Login / Register. Below this is the 'Directory' section with search filters: Keyword Search (autism support), District (Bradford District wide), Category (- Any -), Postcode, and Distance (- Any -). There are 'APPLY' and 'CLEAR' buttons. Below the search filters is a map of Bradford and surrounding areas. The map shows several blue location pins. Below the map, there are two search results:

Name	Description
16-25 advice advocacy action	#youngpeople #advice Free independent advice service for young people, dealing with housing, homelessness, benefits, debt. We also refer to supported housing schemes, support around drugs and alcohol misuse, counselling and training and education. Opening times Bread and roses: Tuesday 10am to 1pm, Wednesday 10am to 2pm, Thursday 10am to 1pm Shipley Youth Cafe: Tuesday 2.00pm to 4pm, Thursday 2.00pm to 4.30pm Free advice for 16 to 25 year olds, open door policy, drop in service. Registered charity no. 1147427
1st Shipley (Windhill) Scout Group	Scouting offers challenge and adventure to young people age 6 to 25. The 1st Shipley (Windhill) Group provides weekly meetings with a programme of exciting and challenging activities designed to develop teamworking skills, self-reliance, life skills and public service awareness. The meetings are supplemented by away days, weekend and longer periods in camp or bunkhouse where basic skill in caving, climbing, mountain navigation, canoeing, outdoor cooking and a host of other activities are provided. We also give basic training in skills such as first aid and fire precautions and

Early Help (<https://bso.bradford.gov.uk/content/prevention-and-early-help>). Early Help provides behavioural support and interventions. They also offer one to one support from keyworkers and run parenting classes. Parents can self refer by calling ☎ **01274 437500**.

“AWARE” (*Airedale and Wharfedale Autism Resource*) (<https://aware-uk.org>) is a parent-run group supporting families with children and young adults on the autistic spectrum. A formal diagnosis is not required and you can contact them directly. The group covers the Airedale, Wharfedale, Bradford and Craven areas and beyond. Members include families and supporters in general, as well as health, education and social care professionals. They can offer support to families through local services which cross health, social care and educational boundaries. They can advise about accessing appropriate support from statutory, voluntary and private services and this can make a huge difference to a person with autism by helping them to maximise their skills and achieve their full potential as an adult.
☎ **01535 661275**

BIDS Bradford Toy Library (<https://www.bradfordinclusivedisabilityservice.co.uk/>) This is a place where children with disabilities and their families can choose from a range of toys to borrow, can receive guidance and support and can join the community for fun and excitement. ☎ **01274 365463**

Carer’s Resource (<http://www.carersresource.org>) Looking after a child with additional needs, classifies you as a parent carer. Carer’s Resource will do a wellbeing review and identify if you require any additional support. They run a young carers service as well and can provide respite. ☎ **01274 449660 for Bradford** ☎ **01756 700888 for Skipton**

Relate for parents and families (<https://www.relate.org.uk/relationship-help/help-family-life-and-parenting>) Provides advice on how to deal with common difficulties around parenting and relationships. They have online counsellors for support and advice. Can also book face-to-face private counselling sessions. ☎ **01274726096**

Snoop (Special Needs Objective Outreach Project) (<https://www.snoopcharity.org>) Runs a community nursery, an after school club and school holiday play schemes (but not at Christmas). Also offers a youth club, transition service and short breaks. They have climbing wall and sensory play area. Can provide parent support and can attend meetings at school with parents.

Bradford SENDIASS (Special Educational Needs and Disability Information Advice & Support Service) (<https://www.bradford.gov.uk/children-young-people-and-families/does-your-child-have-special-educational-needs-or-disabilities/special-educational-needs-and-disability-send-specialist-assessment-and-support-service/>) – provides confidential support and advice for parents and carers. Support provided to aid parents and children to work with their school and the local authority to identify what support is required and to ensure that it is implemented. ☎ **01274 513300**

Bradford Local Offer <https://localoffer.bradford.gov.uk/> provides information for children and young people with special educational needs (SEND) and their parents or carers in a single place. It shows families what they can expect from a range of local agencies including education, health and social care

Information correct at time of printing