

Neurodevelopment Diagnostic Pathway

A decorative graphic on the left side of the page features several overlapping, semi-transparent arrows pointing to the right. The arrows are colored in shades of blue, yellow, teal, purple, light blue, and magenta. They originate from the left edge and fan out towards the center, creating a sense of movement and direction.

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Highly specialist speech and language therapist

What is a neurodevelopmental condition

What are neurodevelopmental disorders?

- Neurodevelopmental disorders affect the functioning of the brain responsible for a child's communication, social interaction and attention skills. This might include conditions such as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) or Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

What are neurodisabling conditions?

- Neurodisabling conditions affect the physical and sometimes learning abilities of a child. This might include conditions such as cerebral palsy and other medical and genetic conditions

The assessment of ADHD is not initiated until the child turns 6 years old as evidence tells us that assessment prior to this age is not appropriate. Children continue to develop their attention and concentration skills up to this point.



Meet the team

Community paediatricians	5
Highly specialist speech and language therapists	5
Neurodevelopment pathway coordinators	2
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Current caseload demands

Average number of referrals received last 6 months=	147 a month
Average number of contacts for initial assessment in the last 6 months=	66 per month
Children waiting for assessment in January 2024=	1116
% increase in the last 6 months=	20%



The Neurodevelopment Diagnostic journey

There are several stages to the diagnostic journey.

Stage 1- Referral

Stage 2- Triage/Screening

Stage 3- Assessments

Stage 4- MDT

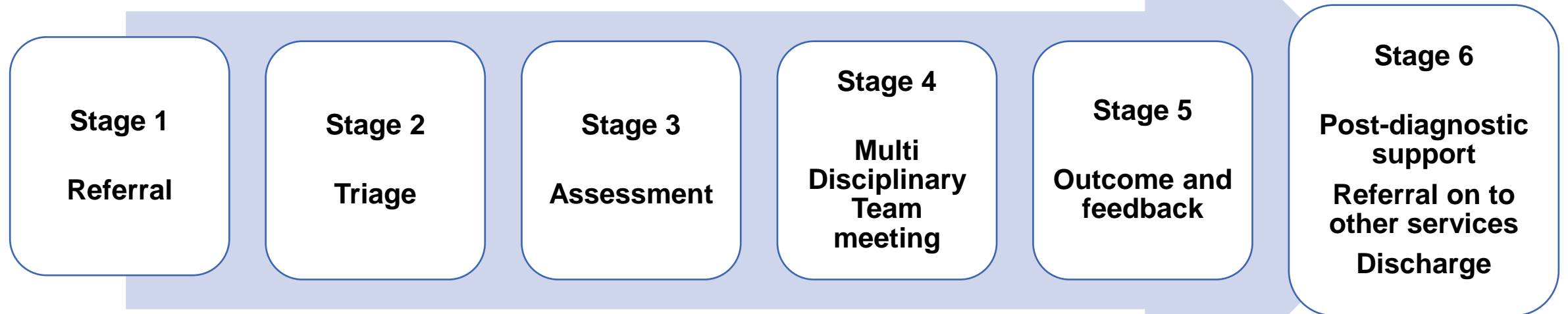
Stage 5- Outcome of assessments

Stage 6- Post diagnostic support/ referral on to other services/ Discharge



The Neurodevelopment assessment journey

There are several stages to the assessment journey. There may be a wait for each stage of the assessment process.



Stage 1- Referral

We will accept referrals from:

- ✓ Early years settings/schools
- ✓ Allied health professionals – this includes Health Visitors, Speech and Language Therapists, Occupational Therapists, Physiotherapists and CAMHS.

The best approach for a successful referral is for the professional making the referral and parents to work together to complete the form.

If a child or young person is not in school or nursery then a referral will be accepted from the relevant health professional working with the child.

We no longer accept referrals from GP's.

The current referral form can be accessed by visiting www.bridgewater.nhs.uk and searching Neurodevelopment Assessment pathway service.

Referrals can be sent directly to the team by emailing bchft.neurodevelopmentpathwayreferrals@nhs.net

Referrals will include questionnaires filled in by school. The referral also includes the voice of the child.

Referral

Common themes/enquires

- Declined referral- 'The CDC haven't even seen my child how do they know he isn't autistic'
- 'The child's sibling is Autistic, so we want to check if x is too'
- 'We want to have ASD identified to provide the appropriate support'
- The referrer not knowing what to tick as their main concern.
- Parents not aware of what their child has been referred for
- Referrals not being detailed enough
- referral information is limited compared to family information
- Masking
- Child known to SLT



Stage 2- Triage

NICE Guidelines – when deciding whether to assess, need to take account of the following:

the severity and duration of the signs and/or symptoms

the extent to which the signs and/or symptoms are present across different settings (for example, home and school)

the impact of the signs and/or symptoms on the child or young person and on their family or carer

the level of parental or carer concern, and if appropriate the concerns of the child or young person

factors associated with an increased prevalence of autism

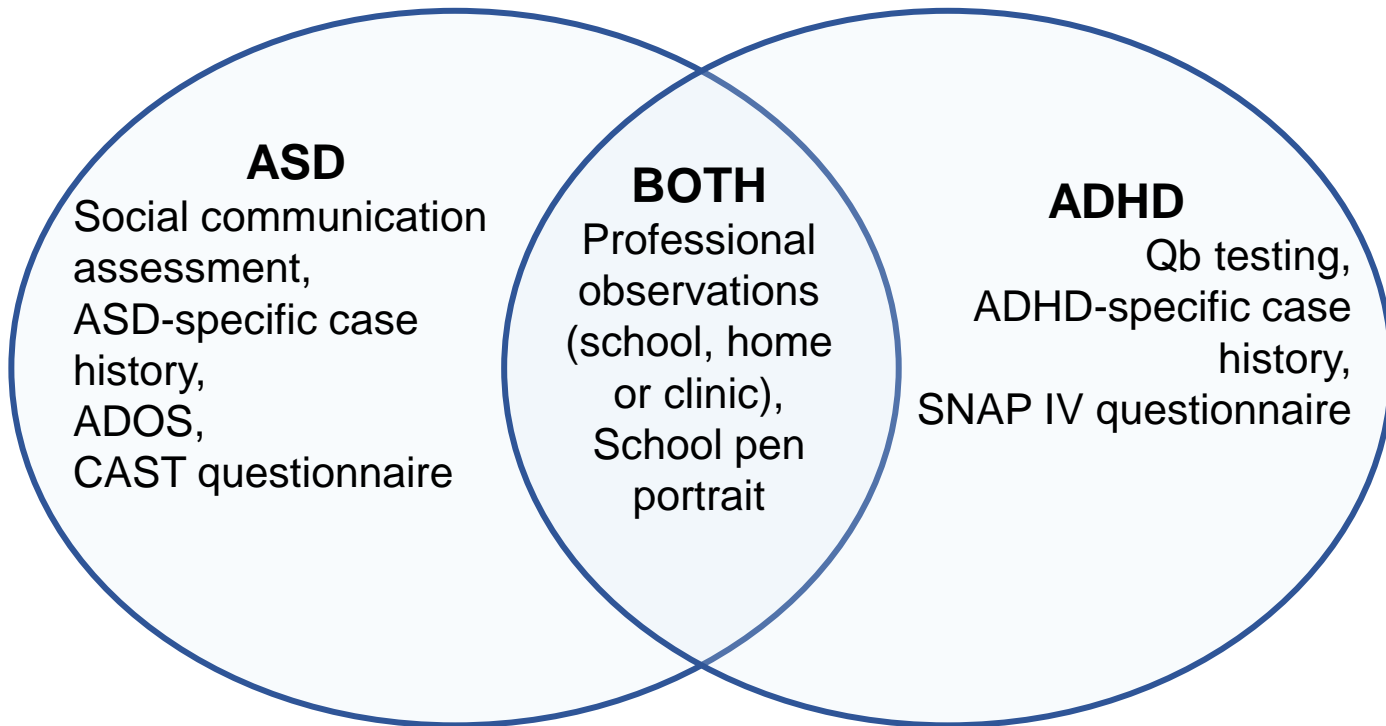
the likelihood of an alternative diagnosis

Deciding if the neurodevelopment assessment is appropriate for the child is based on the referral form and the screening questionnaires. The focus here is on ascertaining whether the person may have traits indicative of a neurodevelopmental condition or needs to be signposted to an alternative service.

The triage professionals include consultant paediatricians and highly specialist speech and language therapists.



Stage 3- Diagnostic Assessment



Our multidisciplinary team clinicians will also consider observations and/or assessments from other services such as:

- CAMHS
- Educational psychology
- Mainstream SLT service
- Occupational therapy
- Physiotherapy
- Early years outreach SEND support

Ongoing pathway support

- SLT summary report with advice and strategies and a link to online training
- Links to additional services for support
- OT website support for sensory needs

<https://bridgewater.nhs.uk/warrington/paediatricoccupationaltherapy/resources>

Support is available to families throughout the process and this is not dependent on any diagnosis.



Stage 4- MDT for Autism assessment

The neurodevelopment assessment team will gather all information provided as part of the assessment and present this to the MDT for consideration. They will look at all information and compare this against the DSM-V diagnostic criteria.

They will be considering the following:

- Difficulties in the areas of social communication and interaction
- Restrictive and repetitive patterns of behaviour
- Presence of these difficulties in the developmental period
- Significance of the presented difficulties and impact on the child

NICE Guidelines highlight the need to consider the following differential diagnosis for ASD:

- a social communication disorder
- learning disability
- DCD
- mood and attachment disorders
- plus the impact of any significant hearing or visual impairment, selective mutism or traumatic life experiences
- specific language delay
- global developmental delay
- ADHD
- anxiety and psychosis disorders

Stage 5- Outcome of ADHD assessment

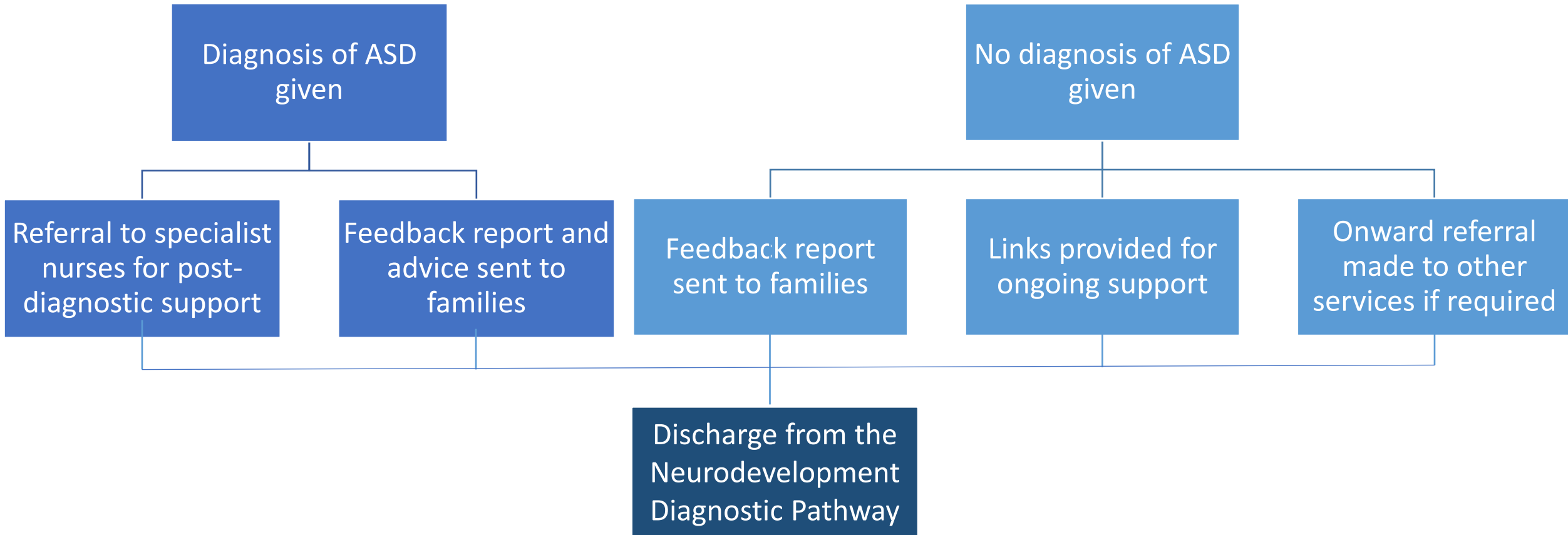
Once all information is received the paediatrician will be able to review the assessments completed for a child and in some case provide an outcome at the initial assessment once a development history is taken.

What happens following ADHD assessment:

- Discussion about the gathered assessment information
- Discussion about school progress
- Discussion about management options
- Pre medication check if medication is suggested.
- Referral to the specialist nursing team for ongoing support as required with a diagnosis of ADHD.
- If the assessment is not supportive of a diagnosis of ADHD, but other assessments are felt to be necessary this will be explained to parents.
- Clinic report completed with advice to families and schools.



Stage 5- Outcome of ASD assessment



Stage 6- Post diagnostic support

Referral to the specialist nurses once new diagnosis given

- ❖ **New diagnosis introduction letter sent out for ASD/ADHD diagnosis**
- ❖ **Parents are offered new diagnosis workshops/ new diagnosis pack. The pack includes resources, supportive websites and the teams contact details**

For ASD diagnosis there is a triage process for all calls into the service. If required, the follow up will be with the ASD nurse or families will be signposted to other services.

For ADHD there are different pathways dependent if medication is prescribed. Children are only reviewed in face to face in clinic if they are on medication. Parents can still access advice from the service even if they are not on medication.


- **Recently there were 25 new ASD diagnosed children referred into the service per week.**

For more information see Bridgewater specialist nursing team on the Bridgewater website

Recent/ proposed developments

- Proposed changes to the referral form to ensure appropriate neurodevelopmental information is provided
- 2 professionals review any declined referrals to assure the decision to assess or not.
- Dedicated highly specialist speech and language therapists now work within the NDP team
- Feedback reports are now sent via royal mail to avoid delays in providing the outcome to families due to face to face appointment waiting times.
- Streamlining the social communication assessment and reports
- SLTs to take initial ASD development history-further training requirement.
- Pre MDT screening to prevent lengthy waits for MDT discussion
- New enquiries inbox set up to enable families and professionals to have consistent communication with the team.

Private ASD/ADHD assessments

- Where there is clear evidence that the diagnosis was made in line with the national guidelines, the findings of the assessment and any subsequent diagnosis will be considered by the NHS, Local Authority, and associated services (including educational settings) in the same way as an assessment commissioned from the NHS.
 - **We would strongly advise that parents check that any private company adheres to national guidance, prior to funding an assessment.**
 - Where a child or young person has been assessed by the NHS but was not diagnosed with autism, there should be a minimum six month wait before a new autism assessment can be completed. The new assessment will consider new evidence and/or changes in presentation.
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Contacting the team

The Neurodevelopmental team can be contacted at the child development centre sandy lane warrington.
We would suggest that any enquires are put in writing via email:

bchft.ndpwarringtonenquires@nhs.net

We kindly ask that you only contact the team if it is necessary as we have a huge demand for assessments and dealing with non urgent enquiries takes us away from our assessment and diagnostic work.

Parents are often keen to find out where things are up to and wish contact the team. Our admin team can not offer any information about the timescales as every assessment for each child is individual and may take varying amounts of time depending on the information we have been given or require.

Please visit the website for more information:

www.bridgewater.nhs.uk/warrington/neurodevelopment-assessment-pathway



Useful links

ADDvanced Solutions

Supports children, young people and their families living with neurodevelopmental conditions, learning difficulties and related mental health needs. They offer:

- Open access to the Community Network Groups
- Family Learning programmes, workshops and activity days
- Children and young people's learning programmes to help them understand and manage their condition.

The child does not need a diagnosis and families can self-refer.

<https://www.advancedsolutions.co.uk/contact>



Useful links

Warrington's SEND IAS Service

Works with parents/carers and young people with SEND around any worries or concerns they may have. They can explain the rights of the child and what help is available for children and families. They can help families complete paperwork, attend meetings and to express their views about the care and support they receive from statutory services.

They can also advise professionals about where to signpost families to.

01925 442978

www.warringtonsendiass.co.uk



Useful links

Ask Ollie www.mylifewarrington.co.uk

ADHD Foundation www.adhafoundation.org.uk

ADHD UK www.adhauk.co.uk

ADHD Support Group Warrington

National Autistic Society www.autism.org.uk

The Cheshire and Wirral Autism Hub www.cwp.nhs.uk





**Bridgewater
Community Healthcare**
NHS Foundation Trust

Thank You



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bchft.enquiries@nhs.net



www.bridgewater.nhs.uk