

What happens in the assessment?

There is no single specific test to diagnose ASD. Instead, information is gathered from a number of sources with your consent. The assessment process can take several months.

The assessments may take place in a variety of settings (home, school/ nursery or clinics) and draw on the following information:

- Your child's early development
- How your child engages in different settings and with different people
- Current use and understanding of language, communication, social interaction, play and imaginative or flexible thinking.

What happens next?

Once all the required information has been gathered, you will be offered an appointment to finalise and share the outcome with you.

Sometimes this will be a clear outcome or diagnosis. However, if it is not possible to decide, we may agree to review progress in a few months time, or occasionally ask the opinion of another team.

A report summarising the assessment and diagnosis will be shared with involved professionals with your consent.

The assessment and diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) in children and young people



Information for parents and carers

This leaflet provides information about how NHS Lothian takes a team approach to provide assessment and diagnosis of children and young people who may have Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

What is Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)?

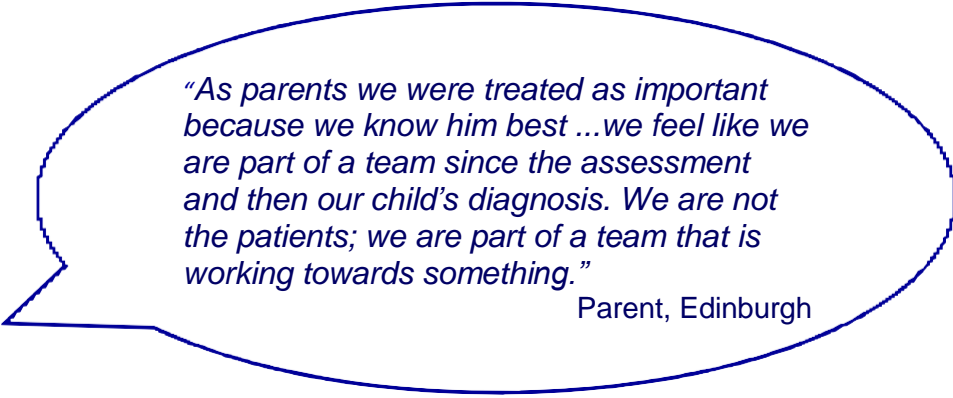
A person with ASD may have difficulties with:

- Social communication and social interaction
- Repetitive behaviour and interests
- Over or under-sensitivity to sounds, touch, tastes, smells, light or colours

Each child or young person is unique and these difficulties will present in different ways.

Why is ASD being considered?

Usually a parent, carer, family member or professional suspects that the child or young person may have ASD. As soon as this happens, the pathway of assessment can begin. Parents and carers are key to the process.



"As parents we were treated as important because we know him best ...we feel like we are part of a team since the assessment and then our child's diagnosis. We are not the patients; we are part of a team that is working towards something."

Parent, Edinburgh

How do we get support?

Appropriate support for a child or young person is co-ordinated through the Child Planning Meeting process, usually arranged by Health Visitors or schools depending on the age of a child or young person. You do not have to have a diagnosis to receive support and it is offered according to assessment of need.

Who is in the assessment team?

The team is made up of many professionals. They have regular meetings to plan stages of assessment for children and young people who may be affected by ASD (or related conditions). Two or more professionals experienced in autism assessment will see your child.

The team members include:

- Community Paediatricians
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service professionals
- Speech and Language Therapists
- Occupational Therapists
- Education staff.

Please note: you may not see all of the professionals listed above during the assessment.

How was this pathway created?

This pathway for ASD assessment and diagnosis of children and young people was created by NHS Lothian and is guided by the national standards:

- NICE (National Institute for Health and Care Excellence) <https://www.nice.org.uk/Guidance/QS51>
- SIGN (Scottish Intercollegiate Guidelines Network) <http://www.sign.ac.uk/guidelines/fulltext/98/>
- The National Autism Plan for Children. <http://tweb-delivery.autism.org.uk/about/diagnosis/children/recently-diagnosed/national-plan-children.aspx>