

The Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule (ADOS)

Edinburgh and West Lothian
Information for parents and carers

This is an information sheet about the ADOS which is a specialised assessment that can assist in the diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), including Asperger's syndrome. It can be used across a very wide age group.

What is the ADOS?

The ADOS is carried out by specially trained clinicians, and in Lothian these might include Paediatricians, Speech and Language Therapists, Occupational Therapists, Clinical Psychologists and Child Psychiatrists.

The ADOS is suitable for all age groups but is tailored for an individual child or young person's language level. It explores their development in some key areas of interest for the diagnosis of an Autism Spectrum Disorder, such as the ability to share attention and communication, aspects of play and imaginary thought and the way that communication is used.

Who carries out the ADOS?

The assessment is undertaken by two of these professionals, one of whom videos the assessment for the later analysis. The ADOS takes from 45 minutes to about 1 hour to conduct, and a lot of this depends on the needs of the child or young person themselves and the pace that best suits them.

Do I have to fill in any forms?

We will ask you to sign your consent for the ADOS to be recorded and we will seek assent/consent from the young person themselves if that is appropriate. On this form we will also ask you to let us know if your child is on a special diet as we may use some food items in the earlier modules.

Where will parents/ carers be during the ADOS?

We may or may not request a parent to stay with their child during the ADOS, as this depends on the module level that is being used and this in turn depends on the child/young person's language development.

If we need a parent to stay with their child during the ADOS then it is usually very difficult to accommodate siblings and we therefore ask you if at all possible, could you avoid bringing them along to the ADOS. We would require a parent to stay if their child had either no speech or single words or phrase speech only, but if you are uncertain about whether you will need to stay in the room and having difficulty finding care for the siblings then please contact us beforehand.

What will happen during an ADOS?

Please note that the ADOS assessment requires that both the clinician and the child remove their face masks/coverings once the assessment begins in order to facilitate communication and enable assessment of social communication skills. Everyone will still be required to wear face masks/coverings in the waiting room and corridors. To reduce risk, there will be a 'pop up' Perspex screen on the table as a barrier to potential droplet transmission for the duration of the assessment and your child will be required to sanitise their hands at regular intervals throughout the session (as will the clinician).

The clinician will also maintain 2 metre physical distancing as much as possible and the room will be well ventilated, so please ensure your child is dressed accordingly. This has been approved through our risk assessment procedures.

To the observer the ADOS looks like a series of interesting scenarios appropriate to the child or young person's level of development, e.g. forms of play, such as bubbles for young children, through to the providing of a story dialogue for a video by older children.

When will we know the outcome?

We are not able to give you the outcome of the ADOS on the day that we conduct it as we need to undertake the analysis straight after we have seen the child or young person. However you will be invited to come back on a separate occasion to discuss the findings. Usually this is undertaken without the child or young person present but this can always be modified if you want to discuss that with us.

If there is anything further you would like to ask about the ADOS before signing the consent form please feel free to raise that with us.

Keeping your appointment

If you cannot keep your appointment, or have been given one that is unsuitable, please change it by phoning the number on your appointment letter. Your call will give someone else the chance to be seen and will help us keep waiting times to a minimum.

Public transport and travel information

Bus details available from: Lothian Buses on 0131 555 6363 www.lothianbuses.co.uk
Traveline Scotland on 08712002233 or www.travelinescotland.com

Train details available from: National Rail Enquiries on 03457 484 950 or www.nationalrail.co.uk

Patient Transport

Patient Transport will only be made available if you have a medical/clinical need. Telephone **0300 123 1236** *calls charged at local rate up to 28 days in advance to book, making sure you have your child's CHI number available (find this on their appointment letter). Hard of hearing or speech impaired? Use text relay: **18001-0300 123 1236*** (calls charged at local rate). To cancel patient transport, telephone 0800 389 1333 (Freephone 24 hr answer service).