

## **Referral information required for the assessment of Neurodevelopmental Conditions in children attending Primary School**

Community Paediatrics offers a specialist diagnostic service for children with significant developmental difficulties/significant Special Educational Needs (SEND) which are likely to be life long and will have a significant impact on that child's ability to access and participate in aspects of daily living. The children referred to us should have the greatest level of need and we would expect that other professionals will already have been involved in supporting the child and their family.

### **Community Paediatrics provides assessments for:**

- Social Communication
- Attention and Hyperactivity out of keeping with developmental level
- Medical assessment of a child who has a significant learning disability
- Mixed neurodevelopmental difficulties which are complex/overlapping and affecting a child's function in school

### **Eligibility:**

- Children must be under a GP in the Cambridge ICB (*with the exception of Peterborough*)
- Children should be of primary school age up to their last term in school
- Referrals should be made by the child's school setting due to the amount of supporting information required, we would not expect a GP to make these referrals unless in exceptional cases (see exceptions below)

### **Exceptions**

There will be some children in whom not all information will be available i.e.:

- Children who are home schooled
- Children attending an out of Cambridge school but live in Cambridgeshire
- Children who have recently relocated into the area

We would advise that these children are discussed with the referral intake team individually before a referral is made as other arrangements may be made for these cases.

This referral pathway is **not required** for the following:

- Physical difficulties/disabilities
- Infants who are presenting with an obvious delay in their development or is in association with other medical conditions/genetic diagnoses

Please refer directly to Community Paediatrics through the GP using the Professional Referral Form.

### **Referrals for children outside of primary school:**

Last term of Year 6 and Secondary School: <https://www.cpft.nhs.uk/younited> - please refer to their own referral process.

Pre-school / Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS 0-5 years):

<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/children-and-families/local-offer/local-offer-early-years-and-childcare-0-5/early-support>

### **Information required before assessment for all neurodevelopmental referrals**

Support and intervention is needs based and is not dependent on a diagnosis. If there are difficulties at home then parents should be supported with behavioural strategies from District Teams and other agencies, which school should signpost parents to. Involvement of the Early Help Hubs via an EHA is expected if there are wider family needs and should be made prior to referral.

Families should be directed to the website at <https://cambspborochildrenshealth.nhs.uk> which contains a number of useful resources and advice including sleep, behaviour, sensory difference, selective feeding etc.

### **Minimum information required for all referrals in this pathway:**

- Completed Neurodevelopmental Referral Form (electronic referral form on website) including
  - a. Assessment of child's current academic attainment
  - b. Relevant information regarding family and social background, Social Care involvement and child protection concerns (if not included on the EHA).
- Early Help Assessment (EHA) if available a copy should be included. We would expect this to have been initiated before referral if there are wider family needs that could be supported.
- Education and Health Care Plan where available.
- SEND Service 0-25 reports where involved - **it is considered good practice to have discussed the referral with your local SEND practitioner before sending.**

### **Social Communication concerns and Autism assessments**

The Community Paediatric service provides diagnostic assessments for Autism (ASC/ASD) in children.

Children presenting after the age of 7 years with social communication concerns usually have fewer difficulties and therefore a diagnosis may not be apparent at that stage. They may improve over time or their difficulties may become more marked. It is important to have a clear picture of a child's functioning over a period of time, and it is important to offer them support before a referral is considered.

SEND Services 0-25 may be involved before a referral for a diagnosis is made as they provide support and educational advice within the school setting, and their assessments contribute towards the diagnostic process. **It is good practice to have discussed the referral with your local SEND practitioner before making a referral.** Parents should also be referred to the Early Help Hub for behavioural advice before making a referral.

It is important to recognise that the threshold for an assessment is high and therefore only children who are presenting with significant difficulties at both home and school and who have failed to respond to interventions put in place are likely to be seen.

To make a referral for a diagnostic assessment for Autistic Spectrum Disorder the following additional information is required before the referral is considered:

- Where schools have engaged in ASD training (such as AET level 1-3) evidence of how strategies have been imbedded within school practice, and their impact (evidenced on referral form)
- Social communications descriptors completed by school (available on: <https://www.cambscommunityservices.nhs.uk/Cambs-Community-Paediatrics/about-us/how-to-refer-to-professionals>)

Refer to the **SEND Code of Practice (2014)** and see '**Improving Outcomes for Children with Additional Needs**' document and the **ASD Pathway**, which are on Cambridgeshire's local offer website, including implementation of any advice from a relevant professionals (for example, Specialist Teacher or Educational Psychologist if they have been involved).

### **Attention and Hyperactivity issues (ADHD)**

If a diagnosis of ADHD is suspected, where there are significant difficulties with a combination of inattention, hyperactivity and impulsivity across both the home and school setting, which have not responded to behavioural support and are out of keeping with that child's developmental level, then the following information is required before a referral is considered. Community Paediatrics assesses only primary school aged children for ADHD and refers to CAMHS for ongoing medical management.

To make a referral for a diagnostic assessment for ADHD the following additional information is required before the referral is considered:

- Evidence of behavioural management and intervention, either universal or targeted from the Locality Team. For parenting and behavioural support for families, please specify dates and course name and provide certificates if available. This must have taken place within the last 3 years. Referrals will not be considered unless this has already been undertaken prior to referral and the response has been evaluated
- Information regarding any home or environmental factors which may have an impact on that child's behaviour and/or functioning. (If not already on EHA to be evidenced on referral form)

### **Behavioural issues occurring at home only**

School to direct parents for behavioural support either within the school based services or via their District Team. Referrers would be advised to contact the Early Help Hub who may be able to signpost or advise local services or parent/carer can contact their local Child and Family Centre ([cambridgeshirechildrenscentres.org.uk](http://cambridgeshirechildrenscentres.org.uk))

### **Behavioural concerns only in the school setting**

School based support; consider involvement from SEND Services 0-25 if thresholds for their service are met. Consider behaviour in terms of that child's developmental level.

### **Learning Disability reaching Education Health and Care Plan threshold**

Community Paediatrics will provide a medical assessment for children identified in school age as having a significant learning difficulty/disability i.e. those children who have met the criteria for an EHC Plan. A medical assessment may be offered to those families as part of the EHC process (if they have not previously been seen) to explore whether there is a medical or genetic reason for their difficulties.

We would expect that the nature and extent of a child's learning needs, and appropriate investigation of any specific learning difficulties, would already have been undertaken by the school, and that the Educational Psychologist is already involved. If the school needs advice on this they should contact the Statutory Assessment Team (SAT).

- information required (as above)
- Details of child's levels of attainment using standardised assessments (<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/children-and-families/local-offer/about-cambridgeshire-s-local-offer/the-role-of-the-local-authority-schools-and-settings/>)

Community Paediatricians do not offer cognitive assessments, educational support or advice on school age children, nor diagnose specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia and dyspraxia.

**Referrals with supporting information should be sent to:**

Documents should be emailed as separate attachments, we can accept compressed zip files.

[ccs.tr.communitypaediatricscambs@nhs.net](mailto:ccs.tr.communitypaediatricscambs@nhs.net)

We hope that this is helpful. This information has been considered in conjunction with Cambridgeshire Community Paediatrics, SEND Services 0-25, Cambridgeshire Speech and Language Therapy Service and the Early Help team.

Further information can be found at: <https://www.cambscommunityservices.nhs.uk/Cambs-Community-Paediatrics/about-us/how-to-refer-to-professionals>

If you have any queries or would like to discuss a referral please don't hesitate to contact us.

Please be aware that not all children referred meet the threshold for an assessment.

Due to the high demand on this service clinicians are not able to discuss this directly with families. We are happy to have further discussions with the original referrer if further clarification is needed and the referrer can contact us to discuss on the details above.

On behalf of Cambridgeshire Community Paediatrics

***This information is current in August 2024.  
Further revisions and updates of this service will be made over time***