

AUTISM ASSESSMENT FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet, we hope you find it helpful. There is no single, definitive diagnostic test for Autism — no blood analysis, no brain scan, no genetic screening — so the assessment and diagnosis of Autism is not a quick or simple task. Our assessments are carried out by members of our multi-disciplinary team which includes Psychiatry, Speciality Doctors, Speech and Language Therapy and Psychology. Our assessments are comprehensive and multidimensional and cover all aspects of functioning including home, school and social functioning. Our assessments are in line with best practice guidelines from the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE).

The Assessment Process

Stage 1: Initial Consultation

At the first appointment, you and your child or young person will meet with one of our team for a clinical assessment. Your child and the clinician will all become acquainted with one another, discuss what to expect from the assessment and what the assessment process entails. The clinician will ask questions to gather background information and the reasons for seeking an assessment. You and your child can ask questions and together with the clinician decide on next steps.

Stage 2: Comprehensive Assessment

Developmental History - Parent only appointment

As parents/carers, you will meet with a member of our team to complete a standardised interview, based on the developmental history form we ask you to complete. The interview includes in-depth questions relating to your child's early years and developmental history.

Practical Assessment Session – Child/Young Person only appointment

Your child will attend the practice to complete a practical assessment for Autism. This is a semi-structured, standardised assessment which is designed to identify behaviours that are typically related to Autism. We use the Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule (ADOS-2) which is a gold standard instrument recommended in current national guidelines. This play-based observational assessment involves your child playing with age-appropriate, specific toys and undertaking various tasks with a member of the team whilst their interaction is being observed by another team member.

The ADOS provides an opportunity for the clinicians to observe your child's communication and interaction skills, along with their patterns of thinking and behaviour. There are four modules of the ADOS, and the clinician will choose the module best matched with your child's language skills. For younger children or those with more limited language this is largely play based. For older children, the ADOS is a combination of activities and interview. For younger children there is the opportunity for parents/carers to observe the session, older children would need to consent, and this can be discussed before the session. For some children, the ADOS is not appropriate, in this instance the clinical team will discuss options with you.

Stage 3: Feedback Appointment

Following completion of the comprehensive assessment and the gathering of information from an educational setting, the multidisciplinary team meet to discuss all information and develop an individualised

understanding of your child's profile, including strengths and difficulties. The information is then used to determine whether the young person meets DSM-5 diagnostic criteria for Autism. You and your child will attend a feedback session where the results of the assessment will be shared with you, and you will have the opportunity to ask any questions.

If a diagnosis of Autism is given, you will be provided with information and options for further support. A comprehensive report will be sent to you and your GP approximately four weeks after this feedback appointment.

Please note: The cost of an Autism assessment is £1950. This fee covers the appointments mentioned above. Any follow up treatment, including post-diagnostic support sessions is an additional cost. Please see our separate document regarding follow-up care and treatment costs post-assessment.

One Point of Contact

Our Child and Young Person Services Co-ordinator, Isabelle Hume, is your main contact at the practice. Please email Isabelle directly with any questions: isabellehume@edinburghpractice.com

Isabelle's working hours: Monday – Friday, 8.30am - 4.30pm

Please note as Isabelle oversees all administrative aspects of your care, she is the best person to contact and the only member of our team who will manage your administration needs. If you contact other members of our administration team they will forward your requests to Isabelle.

April 2025