

Launching Luton and Bedfordshire's Neuro Developmental (NDD) Early Intervention, Support and Assessment Pathway

As a parent, it can be difficult to know when you should be worried about your child's development. It can also be hard to know what to try and for how long before asking for advice and support from the professionals. Once you have decided that your child may need some specialist assessment or support it can then be a challenge to know how to get that support.



About the new pathway

We have worked with parents and a range of our partners in health, education and social care to create a pathway to help children who may have developmental difficulties. We have set out the steps that will be taken to get your child or young person assessed for a possible neurodevelopmental difficulty or disorder either by referring to community health services or the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS). This may be a condition such as Autism or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), a learning disability or another developmental condition.

However, just because your child may have been referred does not necessarily mean they will go through all the steps of that pathway or that they will receive a diagnosis of a neurodevelopmental difficulty or disorder. It just means they and your family will be able to get the right help at the right time from the right professionals and services, to support your child's development.

If you have concerns or need help

If you have concerns about your child's development and think that it is possible they have a neurodevelopmental difficulty, the pathway signposts to a wide range of information and support services that you can try before you need to seek help from a professional like a GP, health visitor or from a child's nursery or school.



For example, if you are concerned about your child's sleep, behaviour, sensory issues or speech, language and communication, information can be found by clicking on the sections related to these on the [Local Services and Support within the NDD Pathway](#)

If you still have concerns

If after looking at all the information and support available you still have concerns about your child's development, a referral to a specialist can be made either in the Community Paediatric team - medical professionals specialising in children's health - or to the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS). These are specialists who support children or young people with mental health needs and their families.

Seeking a referral for assessment



The best way to seek a referral is through your child's nursery or school. You can speak to:

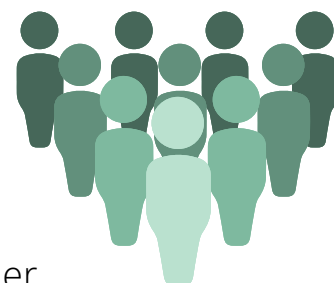
- your child's teacher
- special educational needs co-ordinator
- family worker

Alternatively, speak to your: GP, health visitor or social worker if your child has one.

If your child is under 13 the community paediatric team will consider the referral. If your child is 13 or over, it will be considered by CAMHS.

What happens after referral?

Once the referral is received it will be 'triaged'; this means that a group of professionals will consider it and decide which would be the best course of action for the child or young person.



This helps to speed up processes and ensure your child is assessed by the most appropriate professional or service at the right time. It can help prevent your child being passed from one service to another which can cause a delay in getting the support they need.

If further information is needed to make decisions the professional who referred your child may be asked for this. A lot of work has gone into developing the referral forms and GPs, schools and parents will work together to ensure that all the required information is there so that there are no delays.

At the triage stage, it may become apparent that your child does not require a specialist assessment from the Community Paediatric service or CAMHS. There may be other services that can help, however, information about these will be provided.

Complex cases

If your child's difficulties appear quite complex and it is not clear which service can best assess their needs, the referral will be considered at a complex case meeting attended by a community paediatrician, an educational psychologist, a clinician from CAMHS and a member of the Early Help Team. They will let you know which service would be best to carry out an assessment.

If neither of these two options apply, your child's referral will progress to a specialist assessment by CAMHS. Your child will go through a CAMHS pathway to access the most appropriate clinician or part of the service in CAMHS or the community paediatric service.

What happens at the specialist assessment?

A specialist assessment by the community paediatric team can involve several professionals from different areas; there may be a specialist nurse, a speech and language therapist, a paediatrician, an occupational therapist, a psychologist or another education specialist.



The assessment will look at all of your child's strengths and difficulties to provide a full developmental profile. Thinking, learning and functional skills will be assessed. You will be sent more information about what to expect when they receive an appointment.

What happens after an assessment?

Following an appointment or appointments there will be an outcome meeting where you can discuss the assessment, a plan or next steps and the support that is available for you and your child. It may be that your child receives a specific diagnosis or diagnoses and, if this is the case, interventions, reviews and discharge plans will be discussed. You will receive information about all the support that is available locally.

If no specific diagnosis is made you will be reminded about where you can go to get support to help your child with their development or learning.



If you or someone you know is concerned about a child's development, use Central Bedfordshire's [NDD Pathway](#) to get information, advice and support.

