

# Autism - assessments



## Who can make an assessment?

Autism is diagnosis that can only be made by a suitably qualified medical professional.

In Cambridgeshire, this service is provided through the NHS by the Community Pediatrician or Clinical Psychologist for preschool and primary school-aged children and the Child psychiatrist/psychologist (CAMH) for secondary school age. Find out more [here](#).

## How is an assessment made?

The process in the Multidisciplinary Social Communication Clinic is clearly defined. Parent carers will be asked to attend an appointment where they will provide a case history to a clinician and describe needs/behaviours/what they see and experience with their child. At the same time there is also an opportunity to observe the child's social communication skills to contribute to the clinical opinion about whether the diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder is relevant or not. (exactly what this play based assessment looks like depends on the age of the child).

For secondary school aged assessments, there is no longer a requirement for an Early Help Assessment to be completed as part of the referral for neurodevelopmental assessment.

Since Covid, the assessment happens in a slightly different way: the history taking with the parent happens over video or over the phone, sometimes with the child present. The clinician then decides whether the information, provided by the parent and also from school, is sufficient to come to a conclusion. In some cases, a short face-to-face assessment will be offered but for most children the recognition that there are significant social communication difficulties should be sufficient to access the right support. In some cases, the level of need is apparent from a very early age. In most cases the need emerges over time as communication skills develop and as a child's emotional response mature and the child then not being able to meet the increasing social demands.

## Parent Courses

You may be offered a course intended to offer support and some practical things that may help your child or young person. These are not legally required to access an autism diagnosis, nor are they intended to imply you're not doing a good job as a parent carer. but they are strongly recommended as they can be a useful source of information and support for you and your child.

## Free Pinpoint Workshops

Pinpoint offer free ADHD and ASD workshops. These are open to all parent carer of children with or without a diagnosis. You can find out more on our website: [pinpoint-cambs.org.uk](http://pinpoint-cambs.org.uk) under Events.