



# Coventry's Neurodevelopmental Pathway: A Guide for Parents

# Welcome

This guide is for the parents and carers of children and young people who may be experiencing social communication difficulties. It provides information about:

- the changes to Coventry's Neurodevelopmental Pathway;
- the reasons why things have changed;
- how parents and carers can access the pathway;
- the support that can be provided through the pathway

## How has the pathway changed?

The children and young people's Neurodevelopmental Pathway provides the option of 'Early Intervention' in schools for children who present with difficulties that may be linked to Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD). This support is provided before a diagnostic assessment.

## Why has the pathway changed?

The experiences of parents and professionals show that sometimes children present differently at home than they do in school. When this happens, it can be hard for school staff to identify what targeted support may be needed. In addition, schools are sometimes reluctant to refer a child for an ASD assessment when they don't have concerns themselves. This can lead to parents or carers asking their GP to refer for a diagnostic assessment, which can delay the assessment process.

By making intervention available prior to diagnosis, we will be able to provide help to children earlier on and gather more information to support with any subsequent diagnostic assessment.

## How can parents and carers access the new pathway?

If you have concerns about your child's health and emotional well-being, you may find it helpful to complete the Coventry NHS 'Dimensions' tool, which can be accessed at: <https://dimensions.covwarkpt.nhs.uk>

The tool will help you to identify which services are best placed to meet the needs of your child and family.

If the report generated by the Dimensions tool recommends an assessment for ASD, then you should arrange a meeting with your school's Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo).



## How does the new pathway work?

The pathway is split into three phases, as shown below:

1. All children begin at the **Planning phase**, during which the best approach to supporting your child is agreed
2. This is followed by EITHER an **Early Intervention phase**, during which targeted intervention is provided in school, OR a **Referral phase**, during which information is gathered to support a referral for a specialist assessment
3. Finally, some children will progress to a **Diagnostic phase** where specialist professionals will consider whether the child's needs are consistent with a diagnosis of ASD



## Planning phase

The pathway begins with a conversation between you and the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo) at your child's school.

After this, the SENCo will talk to an Educational Psychologist (EP) and together they will recommend the best approach to supporting your child.

This might be a referral to Early Intervention, or directly to the Neurodevelopmental Service.

The SENCo will share this recommendation with you. If Early Intervention is recommended, but you would prefer a direct referral, you can request this.

## Early Intervention phase

OR

## Referral phase

If you agree to your child accessing Early Intervention, a meeting will be held with you, the school SENCo and a member of the Early Intervention Team, who will either be a Complex Communication Specialist Practitioner (CCSP) or an Educational Psychologist (EP).

A targeted short term plan and timescale will be agreed to support your child. This will then be reviewed.

At the review meeting, it will be decided whether the school continues to provide support, or to refer to another service, or request a specialist ASD assessment.

If you agree to your child being referred directly to the Neurodevelopmental Service, then you will be asked to complete their referral form together with the SENCo.

## Diagnostic phase

If your child is referred to the Neurodevelopmental Service for an ASD assessment, then a specialist practitioner from this service will contact you to discuss the next steps of the assessment process.

This is likely to involve a face to face meeting and completing a questionnaire.

If you need this information in another format or language please contact Jennet Gabriel on 024 7678 8400 or e-mail: [jennet.gabriel@coventry.gov.uk](mailto:jennet.gabriel@coventry.gov.uk)