



## **Specialist Assessment Service Access Criteria**

The Specialist Assessment Service works with children who have either complex medical and developmental needs or with children and young people where their difficulties may indicate an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). For children with complex medical needs we may also provide coordinated therapeutic work to meet a child's needs.

Some children referred to us may have a dysphagia (swallowing) difficulty as part of their overall needs. We have a separate referral process for these children. Please contact the Specialist Assessment Service directly or use the referral form for Dysphagia on this site.

Service referral criteria are in place to ensure that this service works with the child/young people and their families who need and will benefit from further highly specialist assessment.

### **For all children**

1. The referral must be discussed and agreed with parents/carers.
2. The child/young person must be aged between 0 years and 17 years 11 months for an Autism assessment or is under 5 years old for a complex medical needs assessment.
3. The child/young person must be registered with a Solihull GP.

### **For child/young person with difficulties that may indicate an ASD**

1. There needs to be evidence of significant difficulties, impacting on their daily lives, across the 3 areas of their development associated with ASD: Social interaction, communication and flexibility of thought and behaviour.
2. The child must have received a graduated response to meet their individual needs. This must be in place and evidenced over a minimum of 6 months or 2 terms for all school aged children. This graduated response could be from e.g. Specialist Educational Services, Health Visitors, Paediatrician, Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy, Solar (CAMHS) etc. The evidence needs to tell us the outcomes of the support put in place and the referral form will guide you as to how to provide this level of detail.
3. Parents/carers and professionals need to work in partnership to complete the referral form so that we understand how the child/young person presents at home and at school. In a school setting the form should be completed and signed by the school ASD Lead or SENCo. If no problems are being seen in school we will still need the school view.

We offer help to all families and professionals to complete the form if required.

## **For children referred with a complex medical and/or developmental need**

1. Evidence is required to show that the child has significant medical needs or difficulties which impact across all areas of their development e.g. gross & fine motor, communication, sensory concerns, learning & play.
2. It needs to be clear that the child requires a highly specialist assessment and would benefit from specialist coordinated care packages to ensure their needs are best met.

A separate referral form and criteria are available for a Dysphagia (Swallowing Difficulty) referral. The Meadow Centre cannot accept responsibility for Dysphagia referrals on the general referral form as specific details are required in relation to the child's difficulties.

### **Guidance notes**

The referral form requires very detailed information and is best given to parents to complete in partnership with a child's school/setting or professionals working closely with the child over time on a regular basis.

It is not unusual for children to present differently at home and at school and it is important that we know about these differences. If a child is not experiencing as many difficulties in the setting/school as at home we would like school and parents to meet and monitor the difficulties over 2 terms so that the referral is supported with information that documents and helps us understand these differences.

However if parents are concerned that a referral is not being supported by setting/school they can consult with their GP for advice and referral support. The GP may wish to write to us so that we can support the family in gathering the profile of information required.

For very young children, parents may initially wish to share any concerns with their Health Visitor who can then support them with the most appropriate next steps.

The information sent to us will be considered at our multi agency referral meeting which is held fortnightly and is attended by representatives from Health and Education . Further information or clarification may be requested at that stage. When the information has been considered we will inform parents, referrers and professionals involved of our recommendations as to the most appropriate next steps.

A re-referral of children previously assessed by the Service cannot be accepted within a 2 year period and there will need to be evidence of significant changes in the child's presentation since the previous assessment was carried out before a re-referral is made.