

Neuro- developmental Assessment Clinic (including the Autism Assessment Service):

Information for families

**Great Ormond Street Hospital
for Children NHS Foundation Trust**

This information sheet from Great Ormond Street Hospital (GOSH) describes the Neurodevelopmental Assessment Clinic and what to expect when you bring your child to a clinic appointment.

The Neurodevelopmental Assessment Clinic forms part of the Wolfson Neurodisability Service and provides specialist expertise in the assessment and management of children with complex neurodevelopmental disorders. The assessment focuses on the entire child and their strengths and weaknesses to provide a developmental profile. As well as a full medical examination, the following may be assessed:

- cognition and learning potential
- social and communication skills
- speech and language development
- functional skills

We aim to work closely with the child's local team so that everyone involved in your child's care has the same level of understanding of their strengths and weaknesses so can work jointly to follow through the recommendations made following the assessment. This will include liaison with professionals already involved in supporting your child and may involve outreach visits to the child's home and school.

Who we see in clinic

We see children and young people with complex neurodevelopmental presentations, including those where a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder is being considered. We also see children where there are concerns about language disorders, behavioural and motor coordination problems and specific learning difficulties.

Please see the enclosed visual timetable to see where the clinic is held and what will happen.

Meet the team

The clinic team comprises a Consultant Paediatrician, Specialist Registrar in training, Clinical Psychologist, Speech and Language Therapist and Occupational Therapist. Which team members attend the clinic appointment will vary depending on the aspects of your child's development being assessed.

About the clinic appointments

We will offer you and your child a series of appointments to carry out the assessments, with each appointment usually lasting for half a day or three to four hours.

If you are unable to keep an appointment, please inform the department at least two weeks beforehand as we can then offer the appointment to another child on the waiting list. As so many children and young people need to use our services, we have had to introduce a policy whereby if a child cancels or does not attend two appointments in a row, we will close their referral and inform the referring doctor.

Who should attend?

If your child is of school age, we will usually talk to one or both parents (or another adult who knows your child well) while they are being assessed. If your child is likely to want one of you to stay with them, it is helpful if the other parent could attend to talk to us about their developmental history to date.

You may wish to invite other professionals involved in your child's care to the feedback session when all assessments have been completed. We will ask you for details of other professionals you might want to invite when you attend the first appointment.

What should we bring?

Please bring reports on your child from their school or services that may be involved locally such as Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy or Educational Psychology

During each assessment appointment, we usually build in a short break for you and your child so please bring along snacks and drinks that you might want. It can also help to bring along your child's favourite toy or game to help them feel more comfortable throughout the assessment process.

What will the assessment process involve?

The assessment process is generally divided into three sessions. A summary for parents will be provided at the end of each session.

The first two sessions involve formal and play based assessments to help the team understand your child's difficulties. These two sessions may happen in any order. During assessments questionnaires may be used to help understand more about your child. Some questionnaires are for parents, the others will be sent to school for education staff to complete.

One session is usually led by the Consultant Paediatrician and Clinical Psychologist and will cover:

- A detailed history of your child's early development and their current difficulties taken by the Consultant Paediatrician.

They will also talk to you about any medical concerns and may carry out a medical examination of your child.

- The Clinical Psychologist will carry out standardised assessments with your child and may ask you to complete questionnaires, some of which will be sent to school for class teachers to complete.

The other session is led by the Speech and Language Therapist and Occupational Therapist and will involve:

- The Speech and Language Therapist will talk to you about any current concerns you have about your child's speech and language. Previous assessments will be reviewed and, if helpful, further assessments will be carried out in clinic.
- The Occupational Therapist will discuss your child's current functional skills and assess their ability to carry out age appropriate self-care and school based tasks. The session may also include an assessment of your child's motor abilities and consideration of possible sensory based difficulties that may be impacting on their occupational performance.

The third session will involve all relevant members of the team who will talk to you to understand your main concerns and any questions you would like the team to address. They will plan any further assessments and/or referrals needed and give you an outline of what to expect next.

When will we get the results and recommendations?

The feedback session will be planned for when all the assessments have been completed and will be attended by as many members of the team as possible. You can also ask for local professionals involved in your child's care to attend.

The clinic team will discuss all the results with you (and your child if they are old enough), answer any questions and make a series of recommendations. We will give you a summary of the findings before you go home after the feedback session.

In some cases, the recommendations may involve further investigations such as an MRI scan, EEG scan or blood tests. These may be arranged at GOSH or through your local team. If further investigations are needed, we will see you at another appointment to feedback the results.

After completion of all assessments and following feedback, within three weeks or so, we will send you a full report of the assessment findings and recommendations, with copies sent to the referring doctor and other professionals involved in your child's care. We do not routinely offer a further appointment following the full report so we will usually discharge your child from the service at this point.

Audit and research

This helps the team evaluate the service provided and increase our knowledge about neurodevelopmental disorders:

- We keep a secure registered database of clinical information about children attending the clinic which we use to improve the quality of care we provide. This information is not shared for any other purpose and is anonymous so no individual child can be identified.
- We also use information collected during appointments to help us understand more about the development of children with complex neurodevelopmental disorders. This information is also used without any identifying details and helps us to improve our knowledge of these complex conditions.
- In addition, we are also involved in various research projects at any one time – these are all assessed by an independent panel to make sure that each project is safe and ethical. We may ask you if you want to learn more about particular research of relevant to your child.

Further information

If you would like any further information about the clinic, please contact the clinic secretary on 020 7405 9200 extension 1142.

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