

Adult Autism Team

Referral Guidance for Autism Spectrum Disorder Diagnostic Assessment

Eligibility

Those eligible for a service from the AAT are individuals aged 18 years or over at the time of the referral:

- Where there is a concern that the individual may have an autism spectrum disorder (individuals with a learning disability will have diagnostic assessment within the Learning Disability Service)

AND

- Where this is evidence that this has had a significant impact on their day to day functioning.

AND

- Has given consent to the referral.

Quick Check

Diagnostic assessment of Autism Spectrum Disorder, Autism or Asperger's Syndrome should be considered if there is evidence of:-

- Difficulties in **social interaction** and **communication**
And
- **Stereotypic (rigid and repetitive) behaviours, resistance to change or restricted interests.**

AND these difficulties are:-

- lifelong
- having a significant impact on the person's or others day to day functioning.

If required, see below some guidance questions to assist you when you are considering the above quick check.

Difficulties in Social Interaction.

1. Does the person have difficulty making and keeping friends?
2. Does the person have no friends, very few friendships or friendships that most people would find unusual in quality?
3. Were there problems of this type in childhood, while at school?

If the answer is 'yes' to any of these questions then the person may have difficulties with social interaction.

Difficulties in Communication.

1. Is this person's communication different or odd?
2. Do they have difficulty using communication to get their message across?
3. Are they longwinded?
4. Do they sometimes 'get the wrong end of the stick'?
5. Does their speech have unusual tone or quality?
6. Are there differences with regard to non-verbal communication, eye contact, body language or their proximity to others.
7. Do they have difficulty reading your non-verbal communication, perhaps having difficulty knowing when it is the end of your consultation.
8. Were there problems of this type in childhood, while at school?

If the answer is 'yes' to any of these questions then the person may have difficulties with social communication.

Stereotypic (rigid and repetitive) behaviours, resistance to change or restricted interests.

1. Does the patient have unusual intense and/or odd interests or hobbies?
2. Are there things that they need to do in a certain way/routine? Consider food, clothes, environment, routes to places etc. Does this preference for routine impact on those the person shares their living space or shares their life with?
3. Does change cause difficulties for the person.
4. Do they amass facts on areas of interest?
5. Do they have a need for perfection that can cause the person difficulty.
6. Is there any evidence of stereotypical motor movements (flapping, rocking etc)?
7. Are there any unusual fascinations with sensory inputs?
8. Were there problems of this type in childhood, while at school?

If the answer is 'yes' to any of these questions then the person may have difficulties with rigid or repetitive behaviours.

Other factors that may be considered are:

- Family history of ASD and other neurodevelopmental conditions.
- Recurrent episodes of care in mental health services.
- Lack of progress noted in conventional mental health interventions.
- Lack of engagement in services
- Difficulty with employment.
- Employment/occupation at lower level than would be expected given the person's academic achievements.