

Update on the Neu Approach Pathway and referrals for neurodevelopmental assessment and support

This communication provides an update on the Neu Approach Pathway which was an early support pilot programme initiated in 2022.

This was a partnership venture between NHS and Southend-on-Sea City Council Early Help Services which aimed to provide a clear and supportive pathway for parents, carers and their children where communication, behaviour, cognition or other factors may be associated with neurodevelopmental concerns.

The early stages of the pilot highlighted areas of good practice and joint working. However, prior to its official launch it soon became clear that this model would need to be reviewed due to overwhelming demand.

Education, health and social care are continuing to work together and will look to build on learning from the pilot, creating a long-term solution to meet the needs of children and their families.

Early Help continue to support families and children open to the service and can still be contacted for family-based advice and support. Further information and advice about Special Educational Needs and Disabilities can be found on the [Local Offer](#).

Referral details for neurodevelopmental assessment process can also be found below.

Southend Area Neurodevelopmental Assessment Pathway

The neurodevelopmental assessment pathway provided EPUT as part of the Lighthouse Child Development Centre is a specialist service consisting of highly skilled multidisciplinary team responsible for the assessment and diagnosis of neurodevelopmental disorders. This might include conditions such as:

- Autism Spectrum Disorder/Condition (ASD/C)
- Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) from the age of 6+ years.
- Tics and Tourette's
- Dyspraxia/ Developmental co-ordination disorder (as a co-occurring disorder).

Who can refer to the Neurodevelopmental Pathway?

Any professional from Health, Education or Social Care can now refer to the pathway, this now also includes referrals direct from schools or other education settings. Self-referrals are not accepted for this pathway. A referral can be made by these agencies or via existing referral routes for Primary Care.

How to request an assessment?

All of the referral forms for the neuro development pathway can be found on the EPUT / Lighthouse website.

If you are a parent or carer and are concerned about your child's development, please discuss this with your nursery, school or other education setting SENCO in the first instance. For very young children please discuss with your Health Visitor.

The Neurodevelopmental Team co-ordinates new assessments for Children and Young People exhibiting a developmental difficulty affecting social communication, social interaction, attention, emotion understanding and regulation, sensory sensitivities, rigid and repetitive behaviour that unfolds as an individual develops and grows. Requests for support will be

accepted if there is an indication in the supporting questionnaires that the difficulties may be part of ASD or ADHD.

Full details of the referral process can be found on the EPUT / Lighthouse website.

A Frequently Asked Questions section has also been developed to provide additional information about the process.

What information do I need to provide?

- It is very important that accurate and complete information is received to support the referral, clinical triage and assessment process and to ensure referrals are not rejected.
- The best approach for a successful referral is for professional making the referral to work together with parents or carers to complete the referral form.
- The professional who knows the child best should make the referral.
- If the child is in education, this will probably be the school or nursery, rather than the GP.
- When making a referral it is important to have as much detailed information relating to the child or young person's communication, social interaction and attention functioning or difficulties as possible.
- The referral should include what provision is in place in education setting before making the referral to support understanding of what provision has been put in place and what strategies are being used to support the child or young person and to inform the assessment process.
- If a parent or carer is concerned about their child's development, parents should discuss any concerns with their nursery, school or other education setting SENCO (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Co-Ordinator) in the first instance.
- For very young children parents should discuss their concerns with their Health Visitor.

What wider support is available?

- A child or young person does not need a medical diagnosis in order to get support in an education setting and a range of other services are available that may be able to provide practical support.
- A wide range of information, advice and guidance is also available via the Local Offer pages
- The following guides have also been produced which have been written by parents for parents:
 - [Southend's Guide To Your Neurodevelopmental Journey](#)

[Essex Neurodevelopment Family Resource Pack](#)