

Needs Led Neurodevelopmental Pathway



Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys
NHS Foundation Trust



DARLINGTON
Borough Council



Why Change was needed

- Too much focus on diagnosis
- No joint ownership of outcomes across the system
- High numbers of complaints/parental dissatisfaction
- Politically high profile
- Long waits for diagnosis
- Lack of support for families pre/during and post diagnosis process
- Poor communication across the system- between agencies and to parents
- Access to support in school was driven by a diagnosis
- Children waiting for initial assessments in core CAMHS regardless of mental health need



Parent Carer Consultation

First & foremost we carried out parent carer consultation to understand the issues and complexities with the Autism diagnostic process; parents told us:

No support for families – families felt abandoned during the waiting process

No sensory provision

A mixed picture as to the support offered by schools

Long waits

Poor communication



Why a 'needs led' approach

A multi agency partnership was established to look at the issues and determined a way forward:

Looked at models of good practice and also reflected on the work which the CCG had started in North Tees (Stockton & Hartlepool)

Consultation with parents had highlighted the importance of their child's 'needs' being met regardless of a diagnosis

Confusion over what services a family could access without a diagnosis

Importance of a culture change required across the system to move the focus away from a diagnosis



Investing in a 'needs led' approach

The creation of a family support service will go live in December 21 (there is NR funding currently supporting and interim offer delivered by Contact until procurement concludes)

Investment for Sunflower/increasing capacity in existing OT provision to deliver education and support for families and into settings- go live TBC

Development and launch of the Darlington needs led neurodevelopmental website -

<https://teesvalleyccg.nhs.uk/our-work/darlington-needs-led-neurodevelopmental-pathway/>

Package of training developed in partnership with school Senco's – this has been rolled out across all Darlington schools and front line DBC staff team.



Investing in an improved diagnostic service

Investment was required to increase the number of diagnostic assessments completed per month – this will support the reduction in waiting times

Increased investment in TEWV will create capacity- a total of 2.6wte (Psychology, Nursing, SLT)

Multi-agency Panel (Triage) meetings are established, led by TEWV, and the number of Diagnostic Decision Meetings (MAATs) carried out will increase from 10 to 20 following further collaborative work with partners (SaLT)we are not at this point as yet.

Investment ringfenced for further work with CDDFT regarding under 5yrs pathway- changes TBC along with start date.



Changes families will see

Availability of the Darlington neurodevelopmental website – this highlights all services available which families can access if they need support to meet their child's needs. Also lots of self help resources & information

The introduction of a referral form which they need to complete along with a professional who knows their child – like a Senco, GP, speech & language clinician, teacher, Early Help worker etc. this will expand to the Family Support service from December.

Children no longer start their journey for an assessment in Community CAMHS. Referrals are made to the Neurodevelopmental Team. Referrals are reviewed by a multi agency panel made up of representatives from psychology, speech & language, Early Help & Education – the panel refers the child to services which can meet their needs – this might not always mean a referral onto the specialist assessment pathway

Improved communication – letters have been reviewed in partnership with the parent carer forum to make sure they are written in a format which parents can understand. Regular updates as to where your child is at in terms of waits and updates re support which can help you support the needs of your child.

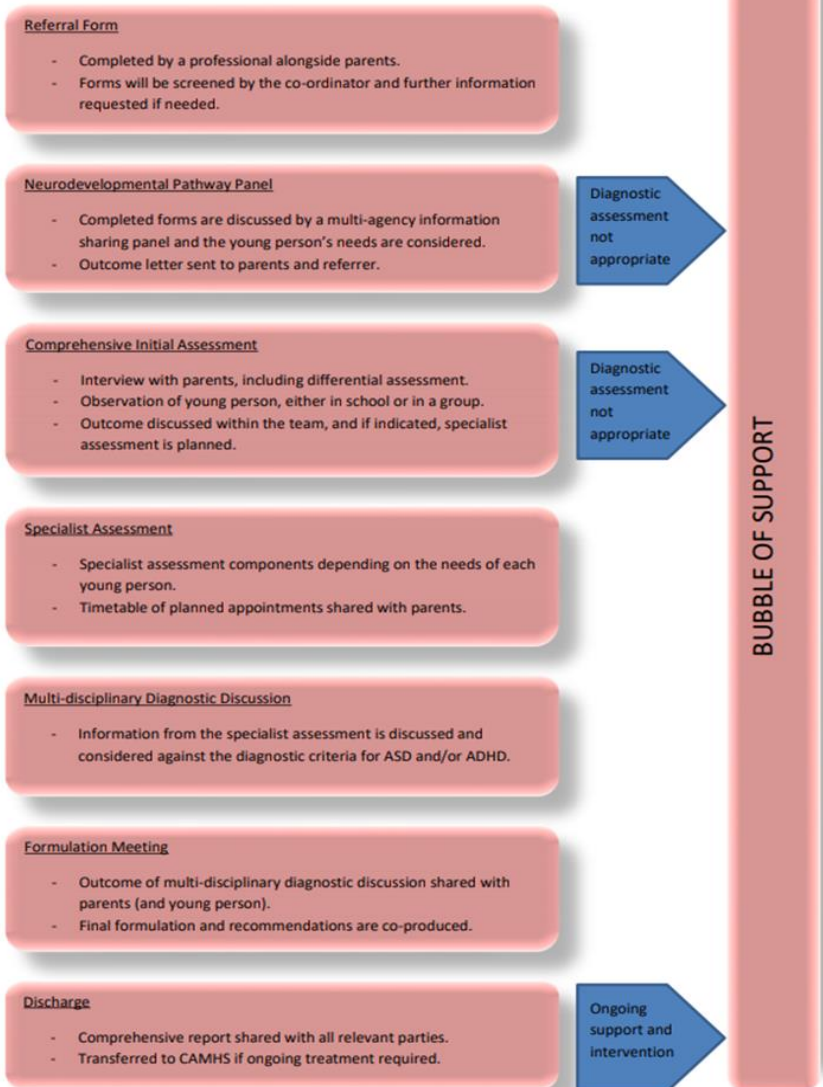




Services in
the bubble of
support



Pathway Flow Chart



Current position

- The doubling of MAAT's undertaken from 10-20 per month has been achieved twice over the previous 3 months.
- To date (since April) 88 CYP have been referred to and discussed at the multi-agency triage panel 45 were accepted onto the pathway
- The new pathway is already having a positive impact on the length of time families are waiting for decisions regarding the need for a diagnostic assessment.



National Autism Strategy – Key points for Children & Young people & how we are on the right track in Darlington

- Investment in finding new ways to reduce waiting times – **CCG investment to double the MAAT's, national interest in our needs led pathway and use of triage**
- Training of education and other front line professionals – **Training programme in place for all Early Years settings, schools, college professionals and front line staff.**
- Each LA area needs an autism strategy to improve local services – **A multi- agency steering group identifies and drives change. This group can support the development of a multi- agency strategy**
- Young people and adults are better supported to develop life skills and be able to access apprenticeships and employment – **Family Support Service will enable children to better understand their needs and support them to address them.**
- Increase in public awareness through a national campaign – **The steering group will work collaboratively to support this national campaign.**
- Investment in preventing mental health crisis for people with autism and money given to LA's to help people in mental health hospitals back into the community –
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- **How we are already responding to this for CYP**
- We have recognised the high percentage of CYP who come onto the Neurodevelopmental pathway with needs associated with anxiety – work is underway to both identify and address these needs at the earliest point.
- We are developing a response to CYP who have been affected by Trauma/adversity
- We will have a sensory offer which will be available to all CYP from birth to 18 – increased sensory difficulties can cause anxiety
- We are developing a Dynamic Support Register (DSR) for CYP with Autism and/or a Learning Disability.
- As part of the DSR work we have recognised the need for training on both Care & Education Training Reviews (CETR) and the DSR processes.
- Key Worker project – commenced August 2021 to work with families of children who have a Learning Disability and or Autism from 4-12 or who have needs associated with either diagnosis.



Next steps

- Ensuring monitoring is in place to enable us to measure the impact of the triage and need led approach
- Ongoing co-production with parent carers is essential
- Implement the response for anxiety which is in development
- Continue with the projects which are coming on line – Sensory, Key Worker, DSR, trauma response
- Develop an offer for those young people in ‘transition’ 18-25
- Continue with the CYP Oversight group
- Work collaboratively to develop an All Age Strategy

