

# Training resource pack

Neurodiversity: Parent-led training for early years professionals to help identify, support and signpost families of young children with neurodisabilities in Sheffield



June 2021



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Glossary of terms used in this resource pack:

'parents' – includes parents and carers

'autism' – includes ASD, ASC and autism spectrum disorder

ADHD – Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder

SEND – Special educational needs and disability

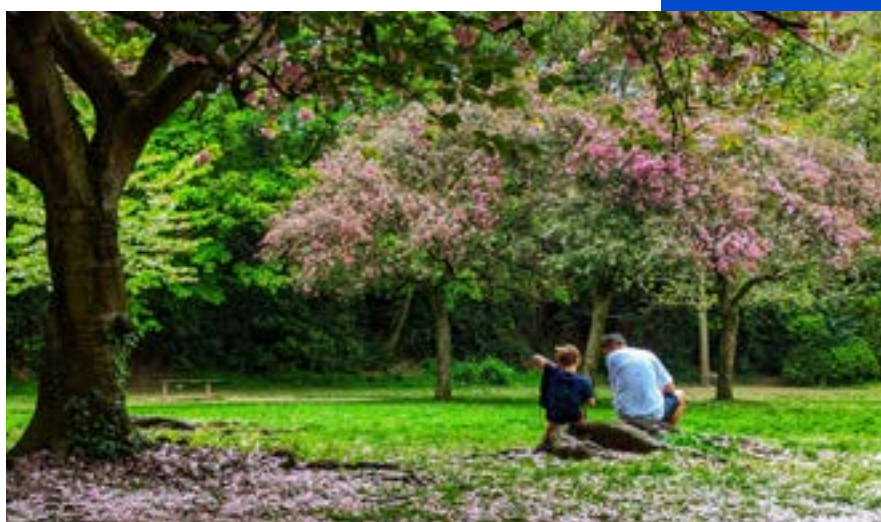
## Introduction

This resource pack is for early years professionals and has been developed in conjunction with training funded by Health Education England and co-produced by the Sheffield Parent Carer Forum, Sheffield City Council and Sheffield Clinical Commissioning Group. The training ran from March – July 2021.

The training aims to:

- Raise awareness of the early signs of neurodevelopmental conditions, like autism, ADHD and learning disabilities
- Help early years professionals feel more confident about discussing any concerns with parents
- Enable them to make timely referrals to diagnostic services
- Improve their knowledge of support services to which they can signpost families

A video of the training will be available soon.



## Section 1.

# Help us help you – developing understanding and confidence in supporting families

## Communicating with families

The first section of the training was delivered by parents with lived experience of accessing 0-5 health and Local Authority services in Sheffield. Together, they identified some examples of good practice and compiled some 'top tips'.

### When it works well:

“They understood and listened to our individual needs and took them into account when planning support.”

“We had contact details, and they were in contact regularly.”

“They celebrated our achievements.”

“They made any plans bespoke, realistic and achievable.”

“We knew how long the support would last for, what the planned outcomes would be and what other support and services were available.”

“If they were unsure of the answers to any of our questions they would try to find out and let us know.”

### Top tips for supporting families:

- Make sure all information and support you offer is relevant, bespoke and up to date
- Manage expectations of services
- Tell families what support is available to them and how they can access it
- Signpost to local support groups and services
- If you don't know – offer to find out

For more information about communicating with families about SEND you can download best practice guides:

- **Communicating with families about SEND (for education)**
- **Communicating with families about SEND (for services)**

## Useful links for families

The groups and services listed here can be contacted directly by parents unless otherwise stated.

### Local support groups

**ACCT – Aspergers Children and Carers Together** is a parent-led support group for children and families. They run activity groups for children and teenagers with Asperger's and Autism, as well as family days out and other trips. Siblings are welcome too.

**Autism Hope** is a support group for parents of children with autism of all ages. They are based in the North of Sheffield and meet monthly. Children are welcome to come along.

**Helping Hands** is a group of parents of children and young people who face disadvantage or discrimination for any reason. They are based in the S13 area of Sheffield and run regular play activities where families can come together and play, feel less isolated, support each other, and share information and experiences.

**PDA Support Group** is a group for parents of children and young people with Pathological Demand Avoidance (PDA). They meet monthly, alternating between venues in Sheffield and Rotherham. They don't have a website or Facebook page, but you can email [pda.rotherhamsheffield@gmail.com](mailto:pda.rotherhamsheffield@gmail.com) for more information.

**Sheffield Autistic Society** is a local charity who provide support and information and campaign for a better world for Sheffield people with autism and Asperger's syndrome and their families.

**Sheffield Down Syndrome Support Group (SHEDS)** is a support group for families who have a child with Down Syndrome and live in and around Sheffield. Their aim is for families to provide advice, support and friendship to each other and to exchange information on how to best support their children.

**Sheffield Parent Carer Forum** is an independent group of parents and carers of children and young people (0-25) with special educational needs and disabilities. Their main aim is to ensure the needs of all children are met. They bring together families from across Sheffield to provide mutual support, exchange information, and influence policy and practice. You can stay up to date with their [regular newsletters](#).

**Sheffield Small Talk – Speech and Language Therapy for Children** is a parent support group for pre-school children with speech, language, and communication needs. It is run by The University of Sheffield and has input from SALT students.

## Local Authority services

**Autism Education Team** supports mainstream schools to meet the needs of pupils with autism and related conditions. They run a dedicated phone service that is staffed by experienced teachers. Monday-Thursday, 1-4pm, term time only. [0114 2506800](tel:01142506800). [autism.educationteam@sheffield.gov.uk](mailto:autism.educationteam@sheffield.gov.uk)

**0-5 SEND Service** works with young children (0-5) with additional needs both in their homes and in settings. They also provide the Portage home visiting service. Parents can speak to their health visitor or setting about a referral or self-refer.

**Educational Psychology Service** work with families and staff in educational settings to support the education and development of children and young people. Parents can speak to their SENCO about a referral.

**The Local Offer** is part of the Sheffield Directory and includes information about support available for children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and their families.

**Sheffield SEN and Disability Information Advice and Support (SENDIAS)** was formerly known as Parent Partnership. They provide impartial, confidential information, advice and support to parents of children and young people (0-25) with disabilities and special educational needs in relation to education, health and social care services, support groups and leisure opportunities.

## Support for siblings

**Sheffield Young Carers** offers support to children and young people (8-21 years) who provide care for a family member, e.g., a disabled sibling.

**Sheffield Adult Sibling Support Group** is a local peer support group run by the national charity SIBS. It is for adult siblings (aged 18 and over) of people with lifelong disabilities. Although based in Sheffield, siblings from across South Yorkshire (and beyond) are very welcome to join.

## Other local services

**Child Disability Register (formerly known as the INDEX)** is a register of children and young people, aged 0-19, who live in Sheffield and have a disability or life-altering medical condition. The register helps the Local Authority and NHS Sheffield to plan services for disabled children.

**Sheffield Carers Centre** offers advice, information, and support to anyone in Sheffield who provides unpaid care for someone else, regardless of whether the cared-for person is a child or an adult. Services include benefits and legal advice, counselling, employment support, telephone befriending, help with applications for Carers Trust grants, and more. They publish a regular newsletter.

**The Sheffield Children's Speech and Language Therapy Service** has an advice line for parents of children up to five. Call **0114 305 3956** on the first Friday of every month between 1.30pm and 4.30pm. Alternatively, you can email [dana.welch@nhs.net](mailto:dana.welch@nhs.net) for more information. You can talk to your health visitor or local Family Centre about a referral or, if your child is school-aged, speak to your SENCO or GP about a referral to the Speech and Language Therapy Service.

**Courses for parents and carers** are listed on the Sheffield Directory.

## National charities

**Contact** provides information and advice on any aspect of caring for a disabled child, including education and benefits.

**IPSEA** provides free legally-based advice on educational issues for parents of children with SEND.

**Cerebra** strives to improve the lives of children with neurological conditions, through research, information and direct, on-going support.

**The Family Fund** provides grants for families raising disabled or seriously ill children and young people.

## Financial support

**Benefits grants and discounts** – charities, trusts and government support for families with disabled children.

**SEND childcare funding** – additional funding for children with SEND is available for childcare providers and families.

**Sheffield Citizens Advice** offer free, independent advice on consumer rights, debt, employment, family matters, housing and homelessness, immigration, benefits, tax credits and DLA applications.

## Section 2. Working together to support families: Local Authority support and services

### Support and services

When making referrals to services always discuss the referral with the parent. Explain your concerns, often parents will have had their own concerns and may be relieved to hear your view. The earlier support is offered the better the outcomes will be for the child and their family. Early intervention will also support their transition to school.

### Useful links

- [Identifying SEND in the early years](#)
- [How to access Council education and social care service](#)
- [How to access health services](#)
- [Early Years Partnership Process](#)

### Health visitors

Health visiting teams provide health advice and the opportunity for parents to ask questions about their child's development. They complete routine development checks and refer to specialist services if necessary.

#### **How can I get in touch with the Health visitor team?**

Parents and professionals can call their team on [0114 3053224](tel:01143053224) to book an appointment or seek additional support. They can also visit their [website](#).

### School Readiness Pathway team

The School Readiness Pathway team work with children who professionals (and parents) feel are not school ready. They can make sure the right support is in place for children to engage with learning successfully.

#### **How do children get referred onto the School Readiness Pathway?**

- Health visitor
- MAST workers
- Ryegate/CAMHS professionals
- School professional e.g. SENCO
- Health professionals such as a speech therapist or physiotherapist
- Child minders



Parents can self-refer by contacting Sheffield Family Centres to discuss their concerns or by contacting the Multi Agency Support Team (MAST) at [childrenandfamiliesmast@sheffield.gov.uk](mailto:childrenandfamiliesmast@sheffield.gov.uk)

### **Who can I contact for more information?**

Please contact [access&inclusioninternal@sheffield.gov.uk](mailto:access&inclusioninternal@sheffield.gov.uk)

## **0–5 SEND Support Service (including Portage)**

The service provides advice, support and training to educational setting staff. The 0-5 SEND team are:

- Three area-based teams of teachers and assistants working in discrete localities to support children with SEND who have been referred to the team for assessment.
- Workers based in North, South and West Sheffield whose support is based on the Portage model in the home or facilitating inclusion into settings of under 3's with significant and complex needs.

Areas of concern can include:

- Communication and interaction
- Physical and/or sensory
- Social, mental and emotional Health
- Cognition and learning

The service does not accept referrals for children presenting with challenging behaviours not as a secondary need to SEND, or new referrals for children displaying difficulties suggestive of autism in Foundation Stage 2 (age 4-5). In this case a referral should be made to the Autism Education Team for continuity of care.

### **How can I get in touch with 0-5 SEND and the Portage home visiting service?**

[The Early Years Inclusion Service,](#)  
[Floor 4, North Wing, Moorfoot Building](#)  
[Sheffield](#)  
[S1 4PL](#)

Telephone: [0114 2736411](tel:0114 2736411)

Email: [elizabeth.hodkin@sheffield.gov.uk](mailto:elizabeth.hodkin@sheffield.gov.uk)

More about the service can be found on the [Sheffield Directory](#).



## What is Portage?



**Portage is a structured home-based teaching programme for pre-school children with additional needs and their families. It helps children learn new skills and helps parents become confident teachers of their children.**

Part of the 0-5 SEND Support Service, the Portage home visitors tend to work with the youngest and most complex children referred into the team. To be referred children need to be showing a delay in their development despite any diagnosis. Example diagnoses include Down Syndrome, Prader Willi Syndrome, Cerebral Palsy and rare conditions like Rett Syndrome and Chromosomal abnormalities. If children have an ASD diagnosis they will be referred to the Autism Education Team. The focus will be on the individual child and not the diagnosis however, the strategies used may be influenced by research into particular conditions.

Referrals for Portage tend to come from medical professionals at Ryegate, consultants from the Sheffield Children's Hospital or Community Paediatrics,

physiotherapists, occupational therapists, speech and language therapists, health visitors and sometimes social workers. Anyone can refer to Portage with parental consent and parents can also self-refer.

In line with service delivery and children's educational entitlement, the Portage team tend to work with children from the term after they turn one. This will flow into child's two and three-year nursery entitlement. They will pick up children earlier if caseloads allow but any referral will result in regular contact and shared play ideas until Portage is offered.

Portage home visitors work mainly in the home and visit families on a fortnightly basis. There will be initial assessment to give a baseline of skills and formulate a plan for the next steps of learning. If families cannot commit to regular home visits the team will keep in contact and incorporate an element of assessment in order to support the child effectively when going into a nursery setting.



## What is Portage?

On a home visit, there are three key elements:

- Family focus – sharing, discussing, and acting on the priorities of the family.
  - Structured teaching – working on targets from the plan. The home visitor will decide on a target from the plan, model that for parents and leave the activity for the parents to practice over the next two weeks. This gives a good idea of how the child learns best, what strategies are needed to be successful and will also indicate the support level needed in a setting.
  - Child led play – observing the child's interests, strengths and emerging skills that will inform future planning of targets and support.
- Refer to other services if needed (Speech and Language Therapy, Educational Psychology)
  - Support parents in their choice of setting and accompany the parent on visits if necessary
  - Liaise with the receiving setting to make sure information is shared and any support needs are identified
  - Visit a setting to support the plan/ do/review cycle and identify targets and strategies for learning

After Portage, children will either access a mainstream or a specialist provision. If a child accesses a specialist provision the file is closed. If a child accesses a mainstream setting, then the file is handed to an inclusion teacher from the 0-5 SEND Support Service and support continues into school.

The home visitor will:

- Initiate further assessment through an Education, Health and Care Plan if necessary



## Sheffield Early Years Language Centre (UCAN Nursery)

Sheffield Early Years Language Centre (UCAN Nursery) is funded jointly by the NHS and the Local Authority. Based at Primrose Children's Centre they provide intensive early intervention for pre-school children with specific speech and language impairments and training for parents and practitioners in meeting the children's needs.

For more detailed information about admission criteria and the work of the centre please see the [Sheffield Directory](#).

### How can I get in touch with UCAN?

Primrose Family Centre  
Creswick Street  
Sheffield  
S6 2TN

Email: [sally.rowland@sheffield.gov.uk](mailto:sally.rowland@sheffield.gov.uk)

Telephone: [0114 2052723](tel:01142052723) or [07989 164075](tel:07989164075)

## Sheffield Family Centres

Sheffield's Family Centres are committed to enabling and supporting children and their families to have a great start in life by providing services as early as possible. There are 7 centres which, together with their outreach sites, cover all areas of Sheffield:

- Early Days Family Centre
- First Start Family Centre
- Darnall Family Centre
- Shortbrook Family Centre
- Valley Park Family Centre
- Sharrow Family Centre
- Primrose Family Centre

For the most up to date information and access to SEND specific activities and services within the Family Centres there is a 'What's on' Guide, available via their social media pages or via email request to: [sheffieldfamilycentres@sheffield.gov.uk](mailto:sheffieldfamilycentres@sheffield.gov.uk).

### How can I get in touch with Sheffield Family Centres?

Email: [sheffieldfamilycentres@sheffield.gov.uk](mailto:sheffieldfamilycentres@sheffield.gov.uk)

Facebook: [@SheffieldFamilyCentres](#)

Phone: [0114 273 5665](tel:01142735665)

Twitter: [@SheffFamilyCtrs](#)

## YouTube channel

Family Centre Registration forms are available in centres and via: [sheffield.gov.uk/home/schools-childcare/family-centres](https://sheffield.gov.uk/home/schools-childcare/family-centres)

## Multi Agency Support Teams (MAST)

MAST is part of Early Help, which is part of Sheffield City Council's Children & Families Services but is separate from Social Care. They offer advice and support to children and their families with a wide variety of needs.

MAST now have SEND specific intervention workers and all referrals to MAST are screened to decide if the core offer or SEND specific intervention is needed.

### More about MAST

#### How can I get in touch with MAST?

E-mail: [childrenandfamiliesmast@sheffield.gov.uk](mailto:childrenandfamiliesmast@sheffield.gov.uk)

Telephone [0114 203 7485](tel:0114 203 7485)

More information is on their [website](#)

## Early Help Assessment

Early Help Assessment is used to identify and document low level or emerging needs to allow practitioners to consider if early help or other services are needed to support individual families.

#### How do I make a referral?

Professionals can make a referral by completing an Early Help Form or Liquid Logic Early Help Transfer Form (parent consent must be given):

[sheffield.gov.uk/content/sheffield/home/social-care/early-help-assessment](https://sheffield.gov.uk/content/sheffield/home/social-care/early-help-assessment)

Parents can also be supported by a professional to complete the form, this might be a health visitor, childcare provider, GP, or family centre worker.

If a parent would benefit from 1:1 support early years prevention workers are able to support families to:

- Access other services in their local area
- Access groups offered in the Family Centres
- Access a parenting group or a discussion group for families with children under 5
- Receive 1-1 support around behaviour management and enable children to be ready for school

# Early years prevention referral process

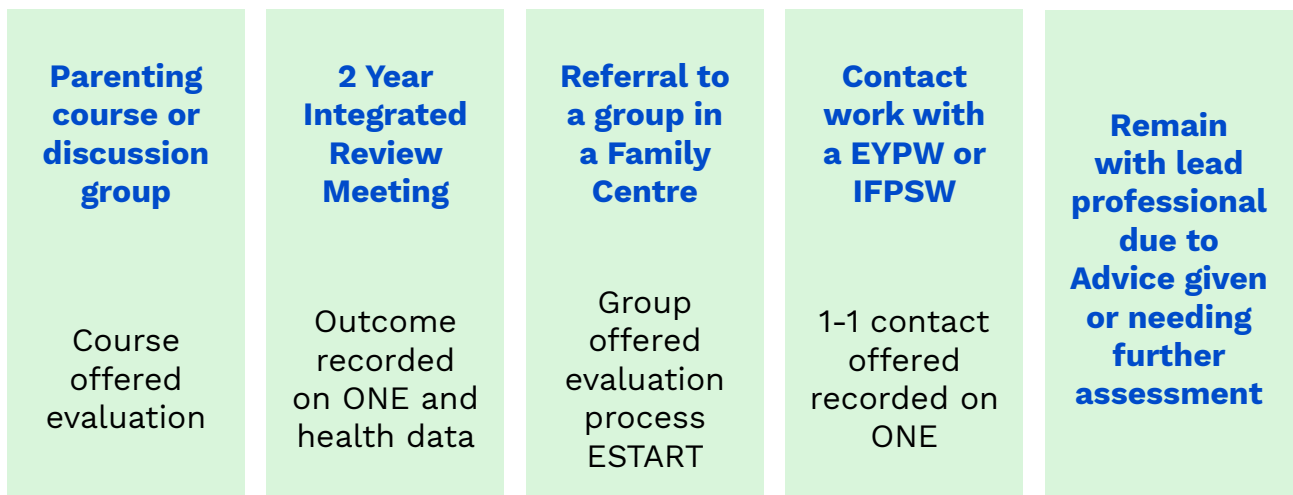
## Identifying service



Referral processed for decision by Early Years Prevention Worker to either **directly allocate to appropriate outcome** or move for discussion at Early Help HUB partnership meeting (use Sharepoint system)

Early years prevention triage professional, Early help HUB manager and SWPI, parenting specialist, senior learning mentor (Inclusion/School Readiness) early years inclusion teacher. Other partners within HUB to be developed.

## Possible outcomes



## The Sheffield Parenting Hub

The Sheffield Parenting Hub has a range of programmes specifically designed for parents of children with or awaiting a SEND diagnosis. These include Stepping Stones, Sleep Support, EPEC, Incredible Years ASD and Triple P.

### How can I contact the parenting team?

You can call the parenting team on [0114 205 7243](tel:01142057243). More information is available via Sheffield Family Centres on Facebook and Twitter.

Facebook [@SheffieldFamilyCentres](https://www.facebook.com/SheffieldFamilyCentres)

Twitter [@SheffFamilyCtrs](https://twitter.com/SheffFamilyCtrs)

Workshops and courses are available to book via [Eventbrite](https://www.eventbrite.com)

More information including the What's On guide can be found on the Council website: [sheffield.gov.uk/parenting](https://sheffield.gov.uk/parenting)

## Speech and Language Support

Families are often referred to Speech and Language Therapy (SALT) by health professionals. The team includes specialist therapists who work with children who have communication difficulties.

### How can I get in touch with Speech and Language support?

If a family hasn't already been referred and they have concerns about their child's speech and language development they can contact the Speech and Language helpline and ask for advice [0114 3053956](tel:01143053956), this service is for parents and professionals.

[sheffieldchildrens.nhs.uk/services/speech-and-language-therapy](https://sheffieldchildrens.nhs.uk/services/speech-and-language-therapy)

### Other useful links and contacts:

- [More about Speech and Languages support from birth to age 5](#)
- Family Telephone Advice (during Covid-19) - Mondays 9:30am-12:00pm [07825 801 936](tel:07825801936)
- Talking Toddlers (by referral only) 12 week programme. Child must be two during programme.
- Speech and language advice about children up to 5 years old – first Friday of the month from 1.30-4.30pm. [0114 3053956](tel:01143053956)

## Funded Early Learning (FEL)

All parents of three- and four-year-olds are entitled to 570 hours of funded early learning (FEL) per year. For children with SEND this FEL could be extended to include two-year-olds.

You can find more information about eligibility and other funding on the [Sheffield Directory](#).

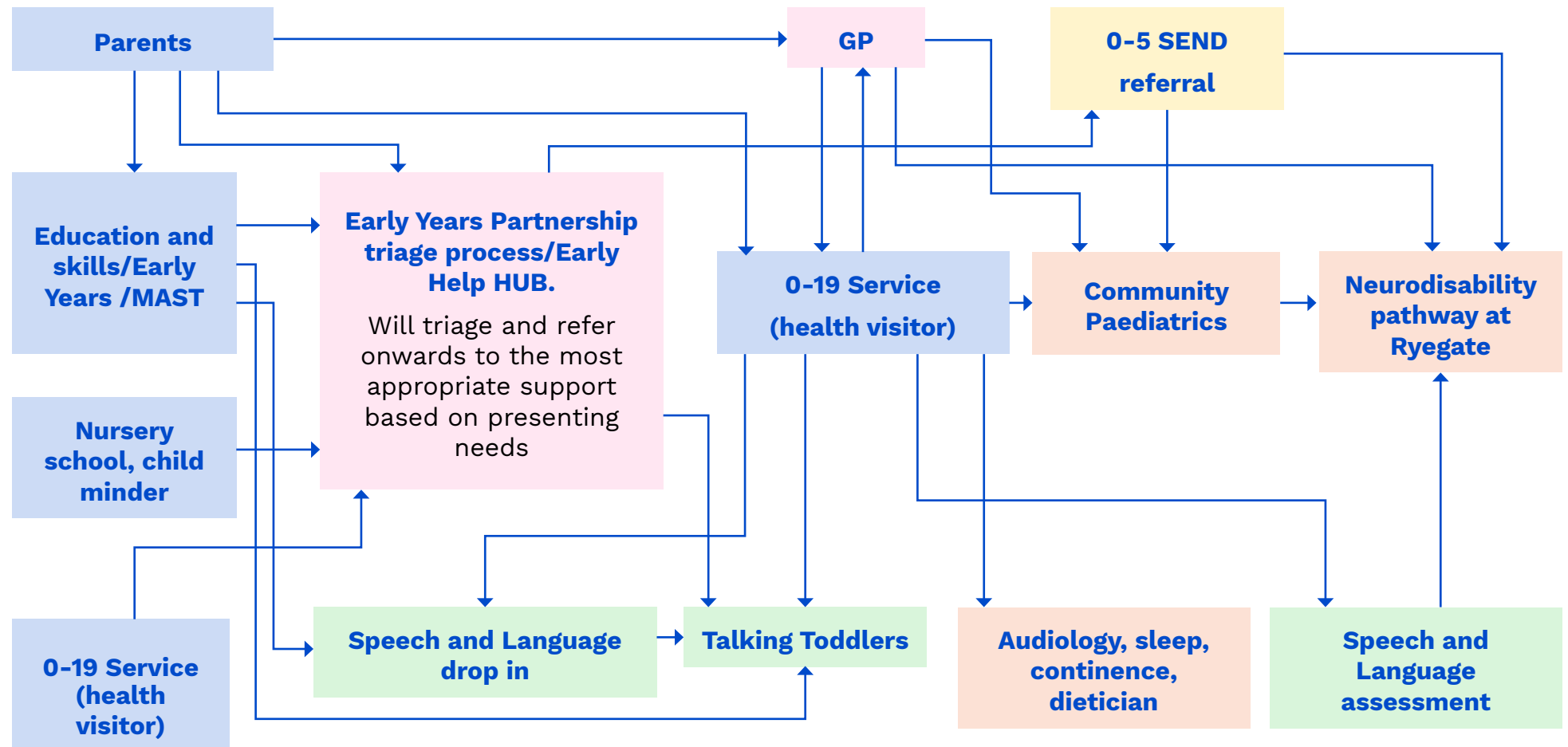
A parent can either apply online at [sheffield.gov.uk/freeearlylearning](https://sheffield.gov.uk/freeearlylearning), or directly through a local FEL provider. Alternatively, parents can contact a local Sheffield Family Centre and book onto a FEL support sign-up session.





## Section 3: Referrals and The Ryegate Children's Centre: best practice to support a diagnosis pathway

Referral pathway for development concerns 0-5 years



## Autism and ADHD assessments

Karen Arnold, Consultant Paediatrician at Ryegate, has written a guide that explains the assessment process for autistic spectrum disorders (ASD) and ADHD.

- [ASD assessments](#)
- [ADHD assessments](#)

### Key locations for assessments at Sheffield Children's NHS



Families will visit the **Ryegate Childrens Centre** as part of their autism assessment. They may also go here if they have been referred for other health services such as a hearing test, physiotherapy or some speech and language sessions.



Families will visit **Centenary House** if they have been referred to the community paediatrician for a developmental assessment, also known and referred to as Developmental Assessment Clinic (DAC). This typically happens parents have raised concerns about their child's development across the board – not just their language development for example. The paediatrician can make onward referrals if necessary.

## Early years social communication criteria – information gathering to support the diagnosis pathway

All children are different and presentation of strengths and challenges can vary over time and context. Sheffield Children's NHS have compiled a guidance list of criteria which could be used jointly with parents to seek a referral for further assessment. The criteria could be used by any professional in the early years.

The document included in this booklet is not a specific checklist or a list of “red flags” at this stage, but some criteria to consider to help guide your thinking and next steps. The criteria are based on the [NICE guidance 2017 “Autism spectrum disorder in under 19s: recognition, referral and diagnosis”](#).

### How to use the criteria document

This criteria is divided into the two key areas from the that are associated with a diagnosis of autism:

- social communication and interaction
- restricted and repetitive behaviours.

### Social communication and interaction (page 2)

It is not expected that there will be situations where you will have to opportunity to observe all these things in one observation. For example you may not feel there has been the opportunity to observe the child's response in larger social situations. This may be an area you want to try to gather information about next time, or when you speak to parents.

The criteria does focus mostly on skills, rather than needs, but it's important to capture if the child didn't do something. For example, if the child moved away when a peer came near them it would be important to capture this in the '*Is interested in peers*' box.

### Expressive language (page 3)

On page 3 you will see that both boxes refer to 'expressive language'. In the top box we want you to record any sounds, noises or words the child says, even if it isn't clear what exactly they are saying. If they are trying to communicate with sounds then write it down as you hear it, so “dee-dee” if this is the sounds the child says to themselves. Or “dar dar” when reaching for a brick on the table.

The box below is for those children who are talking in phrases or sentences. It aims to capture the **way** these children are using language and words. If you are using the criteria with a child who is not at this stage yet then miss this part out.

## Restrictive and Repetitive behaviours (page 4)

This page gives you the opportunity to comment on the child's play, interests and any sensory observations.

Things to remember

It is important to capture the context when you are completing the criteria;

- What the child was doing, what activity or toy were they engaged with?
- If in nursery, were the observations made during free-play or during a time of transition?
- If at home, who was there, what toys were on offer, what did the child choose to do?

It is really important to share the observations you have made using the criteria with the parent or carer, and there is a space on page 1 for you to record their comments or feedback.

Compiled using Autism Spectrum Disorder in Under 19s: recognition, referral and diagnosis CG 128  
Published: 28 Sept 2011. Last updated: 20 Dec 2017

Criteria developed by Amy Webb, Speech and Language Therapist, Sheffield NHS Foundation Trust  
Feb 2021 for HEE Neurodiversity project.



| <b>Early Years Social Communication criteria- Information gathering document</b> |  |
|--|--|
| Child's name   |  |
| Child's DOB  |  |
| Adult completing the document  |  |
| Where was the document completed? (nursery, home visit, group etc)               |  |
| Date information gathered shared with parent/carer                               |  |
| Parent/carer's comments  |  |

| Social communication and interaction   |   | Criteria             | Date  | What did you see? | Where was the child? (e.g. home, nursery, group) | What was the context? (e.g. activity, toy, time of day) |
|--|---|----------------------|---|-------------------|--|---|
|  |   | Social communication | Appropriate use of gestures or copying actions. |                   |  |   |
| Is able to point or respond to a point.  |   |                      |   |                   |  |   |
| Use of eye-contact feels 'typical' ie. doesn't have difficulty using eye contact   |   |                      |   |                   |  |   |
| Talking is appropriate for their age (see Expressive Language table below).        |   |                      |   |                   |  |   |
| Understanding of spoken words, including response to own name, is typical for age. |   |                      |   |                   |  |   |
| Is aware of other people's personal space  |   |                      |   |                   |  |   |
| Interaction  | Responds to others entering their personal space  |                      |   |                   |  |   |
|  | Interest in adults including to meet own needs e.g. do they communicate with an adult they want something |                      |   |                   |  |   |
|  | Is interested in peers.   |                      |   |                   |  |   |
|  | Is able to initiate interaction in a range of ways (gesture, actions, pulling, words).                    |                      |   |                   |  |   |
|  | Likes to play with/alongside others.  |                      |   |                   |  |   |
|  | Response is appropriate in larger social situations e.g. parties, group time.                             |                      |   |                   |  |   |
|  | Is able to understand how someone else might be feeling.  |                      |   |                   |  |   |
|  | Is able to regulate own emotions e.g. seek a quiet space when overwhelmed                                 |                      |   |                   |  |   |
| Is able to join in, share and take turns.  |   |                      |   |                   |  |   |

| <b>Expressive language sample</b> (include all levels: words, babble, sounds, sentences). |      |  |  |
|---|------|--|--|
| What did you hear the child say?  | Date | Where was the child?<br>(e.g. home, nursery,<br>group) | What was the context? (e.g.<br>activity, toy, time of day) |
|   |      |  |  |
|   |      |  |  |
|   |      |  |  |
|   |      |  |  |

| <b>Use for children who are talking</b>                                      |      |                   |  |  |
|--|------|-------------------|--|--|
| Criteria   | Date | What did you see? | Where was the child?<br>(e.g. home, nursery,<br>group) | What was the context? (e.g.<br>activity, toy, time of day) |
| Reduced use of language to communicate (although they can talk).             |      |                   |  |  |
| Repeats sets of words or phrases. May repeat what you have said (echolalia). |      |                   |  |  |
| Difficulties with rate of speech, volume, tone.                              |      |                   |  |  |

|   | Criteria   | Date | What did you see? | Where was the child? (e.g. home, nursery, group) | What was the context? (e.g. activity, toy, time of day) |
|---|--|------|-------------------|--|---|
| <b>Restricted and repetitive behaviours</b> | Can demonstrate pretend or imaginative play in a range of activities.  |      |                   |  |   |
|   | Repetitive or stereotyped play is rare e.g. opening and closing doors  |      |                   |  |   |
|   | Can focus and be interested in a range of activities ie not very focused or obsessed with a favourite activity |      |                   |  |   |
|   | Can be redirected easily by an adult. Not excessive insistence on following own agenda.                        |      |                   |  |   |
|   | Few occurrences only of repetitive movements e.g. rocking, spinning, finger-flicking.                          |      |                   |  |   |
|   | Is able to adapt to change. ie. does not have a preference for routine and sameness or challenges with change  |      |                   |  |   |
|   | Sensory observations   |      |                   |  |   |
|   |  |      |                   |  |   |



## Autism resources

- **National Autistic Society**
- **Autism resources from the Neurodisability team at Sheffield Children's Hospital**
- **Autism Mythbuster**
- **Autism Education Trust – Early Years Resources**
- **What is Autism?** – Video from the National Autistic Society
- **Autism and BAME people**
- **Autism women and girls**
- **Right from the Start** – A toolkit for navigating the early years autism journey

## Supporting communication and interaction

- **Weekend words**  
Sheffield Children's Hospital Speech and Language Therapy have produced a series of short videos to support communication and interaction.
- **Back-and-forth conversations for a child's language learning**  
The Canadian Hanen centre have produced some videos to promote the importance of back-and-forth interactions

## Sensory resources

- **'Making Sense'**  
A series of presentations about sensory issues in children with autism from the Occupational Therapy team.
- **Workout of the week**  
Activities, skills and exercises with the Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy team

## Section 4: Questions and answers from the training sessions

**Q. Who does the observations between 24-36 months if the child is not at nursery?**

A. The health visiting team will complete a developmental review for all children between 24-30 months.

**Q. How does it work for a family who live in Sheffield but whose child attends a school in a different county (eg Derbyshire) because they live close to the county border?**

A. Children with a Sheffield GP can be assessed via Ryegate and information gathered from the nursery can be included as part of the assessment process. However an in-person nursery visit would not be possible if the nursery is out of city. The Autism Education Team will also only visit Sheffield settings.

**Q. Who can access the Startwell course?**

A. Startwell is for all families and offers generic support and strategies around food and healthy eating. They don't offer specific advice for children who have eating difficulties due to sensory issues. Speech and Language Therapy have a specialist feeding branch which can provide support for children with neurodevelopmental conditions.

**Q. I am interested to know what other support is available for parents during the waiting time between referrals being made and assessments.**

A. There are **resources** on the Sheffield Children's Hospital website showing the support available. Also, families on the waiting list are being contacted by the Local Authority to offer support before a diagnosis.

**Q. Who can refer to the Social Communication Clinic?**

A. GPs, speech and language therapists, and 0-5 SEND team can refer to the Social Communication Clinic

**Q. Can the early years social communication criteria information gathering document be used as referral tool?**

A. It can be used as tool to support a referral for further assessment. The more information gathered about a child across contexts the better!

**Q. Is the waiting list for autism assessment based purely on waiting time, or does the triaging process include the impact on child and family or the severity of the needs?**

A. It's based on waiting time due to the high numbers of referrals and the significant needs for most children referred in.

**Q. Are there checklists that might help identify girls with autism specifically?**

A. The last page of [this document](#) might be useful for early years settings.



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