

The Emotional and Social Development Pathway Guidelines



Emotional and Social Development Pathways

The pathway for children and young people, whose parents or professionals believe may have emotional and social development difficulties.

A guide for Parents/Carers



The Emotional and Social Development Guidelines

Introduction

This booklet is designed to help parents/carers understand pathways available for children and young people, whose parents or professionals believe may have social and/or emotional difficulties. This may mean that your child is showing challenging behaviour or communicating in a way that concerns you, for example being extremely withdrawn and struggling with social environments. This pathway has been developed to support the emotional and social needs of children and young people in Peterborough.

These behaviours may start to show at any age but this booklet is focused on the support available for parent/carer(s) of school aged children (aged 5-19). If your child is younger than this we recommend that you speak with your Health Visitor, children's centre or staff at your child's nursery or preschool about accessing the Early Support pathway.

The aim of the Emotional and Social Development pathway is:

- To make sure that enough information is given by parents/carers and professionals through the Early Help Assessment. This will help staff know what is the best support for each child and their family;
- That parents/carers are offered early support, which includes giving information on useful strategies to help manage their child's behaviours and emotions better;
- To ensure professionals have relevant and necessary information should a referral for further assessment or diagnosis process be required.

It may be that the behaviour your child is presenting is a sign of a possible neurodevelopmental disorder such as Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and/or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). These are classed as neurodevelopmental disorders and can affect how children and young people behave and how they understand and interact with the world they live in.

- **Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)** is a group of behavioural symptoms that include being unable to focus, hyperactivity and acting impulsively. Common symptoms of ADHD include being easily distracted, restlessness, constant fidgeting or over activity and being impulsive.
- **Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD)** affects communication and social interaction with other people. It is associated with controlling and repetitive and stereotyped behaviours.

Why was a pathway introduced for emotional and social development?

The pathway was created to stop families having to wait for a long time for an assessment without any support. It is not designed to act as a barrier to accessing children's neurodevelopmental services. The pathway makes sure that children, young people and families receive the right support and families who need specialist assessments can be seen more quickly.

In the past, the school age neurodevelopmental service, received a lot referrals where a social and emotional development disorder such as ADHD/ASD were suspected.

“ The group was so welcoming and I picked up tips from other parents as well as the facilitators ”



Families were requesting an assessment with little information about the child to help the service decide if an assessment was needed. This led to long waiting lists with families not receiving support whilst they were waiting. Sometimes children are not diagnosed and there are other services available to support a family. This pathway makes sure families are offered the right support and that they are not left waiting, sometimes unnecessarily.

What is the pathway?

The pathway is designed to provide support to families as early as possible, once it has been identified that there may be a social or emotional development issue. Before a child is referred to the specialist Children's Neurodevelopment Service, it is recommended that the child and family receives Early Help support.

This begins with an Early Help Assessment which is completed by a professional working with the child/family (this could be your Health Visitor, GP or your child's school or School Nurse). It is important that as a parent/carer your voice, and that of your child, is included in this assessment.

Once this has been completed the assessment will be considered in a panel meeting which is made up of people from lots of different services to make sure you receive the most appropriate support. In some cases you may be recommended to attend an Evidence Based Parenting Programme.

This does not mean you are a bad parent but that early support in the form of a parenting course is considered to be beneficial. The Local Authority have access to a number of courses across the city to help parents/carers learn helpful tips and behaviour management strategies that can help improve life in the home or at school. These courses are free for parent/carers to attend.

We have included a handy flowchart in this leaflet to help you understand each step of the pathway.

I just want to access the General Development Assessment (GDA) - How do I do this?

The General Development Assessment is only appropriate for some primary school aged children. Most children do not need a GDA as this assessment collects the same information included in the Early Help Assessment (EHA). The decision on whether your child requires a GDA is made by the lead Community Paediatrician and the Team Manager for the Neurodevelopment Service at their joint weekly meeting once they receive the Early Help Assessment and all information required.



“ It is never too late to put changes in place ”

The Emotional and Social Development Pathway

Lead professional initiates an Early Help Assessment

A lead professional will be someone already working with you and/or your child. This could be a health visitor, teacher, nursery nurse or school nurse

Your lead professional should make sure that all family members are included in the assessment and that it is as holistic as possible with all information available included. The voice of the family should be clear within the assessment and you should work with the lead professional to ensure your experiences are listened to and recorded.

You will need to read through the assessment to make sure you and your family are happy with the contents. You will also need to give your written consent for your lead professional to share information with colleagues and partners who will be key to providing further support.

Your case will be considered for one of the following support panels and the most appropriate support for your family will be identified

Early Support Pathway Panel
(0-5 year olds)

Behaviour Panel
(5-16 year olds)

Multi-Agency Support Group Panel

If it is recommended that an Evidence Based Parenting Programme (EBPP) would be helpful your details will be passed onto the Peterborough City Council Family Work Lead Officer to allocate you/your family to the next available most appropriate programme. You will be kept informed throughout the process through your Lead Professional

After you complete a programme it is recommended that approximately 6 weeks will be needed to allow you to embed the parenting strategies that you have learned. This will help you recognise if you need any further help.

Is any further support needed?

YES

NO

No further action taken

You will meet with your lead professional to review the progress experienced within your family to see if any support or input from additional services is needed.

If you need further support your lead professional will refer your case to the most appropriate service. This may include:

- **Referral back to the relevant panel for further family support**
- **Request for specialist Mental Health Assessment through CAMHS**
- **Request for specialist assessment through the Neurodevelopmental Service**



“I feel stronger as a mother and a person as I now feel I have the confidence to put the new steps in place”

Why does it need to be an “Evidence Based Parenting Programme” (EBPP)?

As part of the Early Help offer there is the opportunity to attend an evidence based parenting programme. These programmes can help families flourish by giving parent/carers the confidence, skills, knowledge and understanding to build a strong and positive family life. They can help parent/carers to keep children and young people safe, happy, and healthy. Parenting programmes can help you learn:

- Useful parenting strategies
- How to best support your child’s development
- How to manage common behaviour problems
- How to deal with situations that may arise

There are many parenting programmes that are available. However, not all programmes can prove the positive impacts the course has had on a family. In Peterborough we run Webster Stratton, The Incredible Years and the Triple P parenting courses. These have been chosen because there is a strong evidence base to demonstrate positive improvements for parents accessing the programme and their children. These courses are also shown to have a positive impact on children and young people with emotional and social difficulties. Additionally parenting programmes are a great way to meet other parents and develop a strong support network.

If I have already completed an EBPP will I have to do another one?

No - if you have completed an EBPP in the last two years you should not have to complete another one. However,

the parenting programme must be a recognised EBPP (either Webster Stratton Incredible Years, or Triple P) and delivered by an appropriately qualified professional. You will need to make sure that the professional working with you through Early Help knows that you have already completed an EBPP and this needs to be included in the Early Help Assessment. If you can remember you should make note of when and where you attended the course and what the outcomes of the programme were on you and your family. Your lead professional can talk to you about what further support can be offered.

What happens after I complete an Evidence Based Parenting Programme?

Once you have completed a parenting programme there needs to be a period of time for you to use and embed the strategies that have been learnt in the programme at home. It is recommended that this should be approximately 6 weeks after finishing the course.

If you feel that there are ongoing concerns and/or difficulties after this time period, you should speak to your lead professional who can support you to access the most appropriate service. This may include a Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) Mental Health Assessment, a Specialist Neurodevelopment Assessment, or a referral back to a multi-agency support panel.

My child has been referred to the Neurodevelopmental Service. What happens once a referral has been made?

Your case will be reviewed at a meeting by the neurodevelopmental team which happens once each week. If you are accepted for an assessment you will receive a letter letting you know what type of assessment your child will have (ASD/ADHD or both). You will then be contacted again once you reach the



“The facilitators were very good at putting the theory into real life situations”

top of the waiting list letting you know the details of the appointment. During this time the information gathered through the EHA will be shared with the professionals involved to allow them to contribute their opinions.

Can my GP make a direct referral for a neurodevelopmental assessment?

The recommended pathway for families with children experiencing social and emotional development difficulties is to access Early Help via an Early Help Assessment. People best placed to complete this are staff in the school or nursery, a health visitor, or perhaps a school nurse. These staff have a better knowledge of the child / young person and the family. Often GPs do not know enough about the family or your child’s progress in school to complete a detailed EHA, but if they wanted to, GPs are welcome to add information from a general health perspective. If you do visit the GP, they are able to contact the Early Help Team directly and support the Peterborough Early Help service identify any families what would benefit from engaging in an EHA.

What if my child has a Child Protection Plan or CIN plan?

With your permission, the assessment completed by Children’s Social Care as part of your child’s plan can be used instead of the EHA. In many of these cases your child/family social worker will be the Lead Professional. They will need your permission to share copies of assessments and plans. It may be that a parenting programme is still recommended before input is sought from specialist services.

“I enjoy my children so much more and appreciate them as individuals rather than just my children”

What if I don’t want to engage in the pathway?

The specialist services you are wanting to access need as much information about the child/family as possible so that a proper assessment of your situation can be made. However this can only be done with permission and engagement of parents/carers. It is important that you work with professionals to make sure there are no unnecessary delays in receiving support.

If you are concerned about attending an evidence based parenting programme, the feedback we have received from families has been really positive. Some comments provided by parent/carers who have accessed a course include:

- “The group was so welcoming and I did not feel judged”
- “I feel stronger now I have the confidence to put the new steps in place”
- “I enjoy my children so much more now and appreciate them as individuals”

What if I am unable to attend the EBPP i.e due to employment / transport / childcare?

We try very hard to make sure that our parenting programmes are accessible to as many families as possible. For example, we offer evening parenting programmes and are currently looking to offer weekend programmes. However, we understand there are other challenges other than timing and families may be able to get additional support with travel expenses and childcare arrangements depending on your situation. We will continue to try to deliver flexible as and accessible programmes as possible to enable parents/ carers to access the support.



Key Contacts

Neurodevelopmental team

cpm-tr.Neurodevelopmentteam@nhs.net

T: 01733 777 939

Early Help Team

earlyhelp@peterborough.gov.uk

T: 01733 863 649

Useful Resources

The National Autism Society

The leading charity in the UK offering advice, support, information and holds a range of local and national events.

www.autism.org.uk

Autism Support Network

A global online network offering peer and community support as well as resources and advice on education and behaviour management strategies.

www.autismsupportnetwork.com/resources

The Autism Directory

An online directory listing local support groups and events in your area.

www.theautismdirectory.com

The UK ADHD Partnership

An online resource, support and information hub. It also provides advice and support to young people diagnosed with ADHD

www.ukadhd.com/support-groups.htm

Living with ADHD

An advice website offering information and support to young people, parents and carers, and teachers.

www.livingwithadhd.co.uk

