

Autism Diagnostic Service for Suffolk (ADSS)

This is a Primary Care Pilot Service based within NSFT offering assessment, diagnosis and short-term interventions for people who suspect they have Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). ADSS also offer a Carer's Assessment to carer's of those who have been diagnosed with ASD.

Any professional can refer to the ADSS. Referral is by letter (address below) and should include the following information:

- Details of the persons' social and communication difficulties/flexibility of thought (why do you/they suspect they have ASD?)
- Any health conditions/disabilities.
- Are they in contact with health/social care services?
- What are their current difficulties?
- Who is their GP? Are they taking any prescribed medications?
- Confirmation the person has agreed to the referral.

The patient journey follows;

Pre-diagnosis Element;

- Meeting with or telephoning the person (dependent on their preference).
- Discussion of the referral.
- Exploration of their knowledge of ASD.
- Discussion of issues about having a diagnosis.
- Explanation of how the service works.
- Gaining consent to proceed.
- Feedback to the ADSS team and development of a plan.

Diagnostic Element 1;

- Questionnaires, interviewing and testing.
- Often over 2-3 sessions, sometimes more.
- Learning difficulties are identified i.e. dyslexia or intellectual disability. Possible IQ test.
- Mental health problems are often present and may require treatment onward referral.

Diagnostic Element 2;

ADSS offer 2-3 hour assessment sessions to allow time to hear the person's story. Clinicians seek to make the assessment process fit the person rather than them fit the service. For example, Staff doesn't offer to shake patients hands, try to control the environment when possible, allow them not have to give eye contact, etc. The service also offers support, guidance, advice to other professionals around ASD and will liaise with and in some instances do joint-working with other professionals. ADSS can offer training and raise awareness about ASD to anybody who wants to learn more - police, health, education, housing, social care including care providers, etc.

Post Diagnosis Work;

- A draft psychological report is produced with a formulation of the diagnosis and a 'follow-up' session is offered to discuss this and make any changes that may be required.
- It will make recommendations about post-diagnosis work. This can include:
- Referral to the ASD group for people newly diagnosed with Asperger Syndrome.

- Dealing with employment issues i.e. reasonable adjustments in the workplace, looking for a job
- Assisting with housing difficulties. SNAP
- Help with claiming benefits; PIP, ESA, JSA, Carer's Allowance, Housing Benefit.
- Referral to other services; mental health, ACS, Suffolk Family Carers, Shaw trust.
- Signposting to other organisations; 4YP, Avenues East, Leading Lives, National Autistic Society.
- Carer's Assessment/support for carer's.
- Further reading/research on ASD

For referrals and further information contact:

Autism Diagnostic Service for Suffolk
1st Floor
Coburn House
St Clements Hospital
Foxhall Road
Ipswich
IP3 0NQ

Tel. 01473 329400

Web: <http://www.nsft.nhs.uk/Our-services/Pages/Autism-Diagnostic-Service-Suffolk-.aspx>