

WAAS Bulletin March 2024

Your regular newsletter from the Wiltshire Autism Assessment Service (WAAS). We provide an assessment-only service for children and young people who are showing possible signs of autism.

Welcome to the latest edition of the WAAS Bulletin. We want to provide you with regular updates from our service and ideas about how to access support for you and your child. We hope that you will find it useful.

Meet the Autism Practitioner

Hi there - I'm Anastasia Beverley. I qualified as a Speech and Language Therapist in 2007 and I joined the WAAS team in January 2019. You may already have spoken with me during your initial telephone consultation, or you may meet me in the future at your child's assessment appointment. I may also be involved in the completion of your child's diagnostic profile. Like the other autism practitioners in our team, I am also responsible for presenting assessment information to our regular multi-disciplinary diagnostic panel, and for arranging post assessment meetings when required.



This month I have been reading 'stories from the spectrum' on the National Autistic Society website. Here you can read a range of empowering, informative, amusing and thought provoking stories regarding autism suitable for a range of ages. Enjoy! <https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/stories>

Online Information Sessions

You are welcome to attend our online sessions about the autism assessment pathway. The next block of sessions will be held on Wednesdays at 1.30pm and will include an opportunity to ask questions at the end. These short sessions (about 30 minutes) will tell you about the appointments that your child will be offered as well as some helpful support and advice while your child is on the pathway. We are also running sessions about understanding emotions and behaviour.

To receive a Microsoft Teams invite to these sessions, please email familysupport@hcrpgcaregroup.com with the date of the session you would like to attend (see table below).

Upcoming sessions:

Topic	Date and Time (sessions last approximately 30 minutes)
General information about the assessment pathway including information about the pathway, what to expect, and what to do while you are on the pathway, and a question and answer session	Wednesday 24 th April – 1.30pm
Understanding emotions and behaviour including understanding emotions and behaviour and advice about where you can go for more help	Wednesday 8 th May – 1.30pm
General information about the assessment pathway	Wednesday 22 nd May – 1.30pm

World Autism Acceptance Week 2024

The National Autistic Society's annual fundraising campaign will be running from 2nd to 8th April 2024.



Please click here to find out how you can become involved :

<https://www.autism.org.uk/get-involved/raise-money/world-autism-acceptance-week-2024>

Our assessment pathways

We want to make sure that children and young people are offered an appropriate assessment pathway that contains the parts that are required to help us understand them. We recognise that not all children and young people require the same assessments to do this. Children and young people will now be moving at different paces depending on the assessment pathway they are following, which means we are no longer able to indicate a single referral month that is being booked in for final assessment. We want to continue to reassure parents/carers and professionals that this will not result in children waiting longer to complete their assessment journey.

At your initial telephone consultation, and throughout the assessment pathway, we explain that support does not depend on a diagnosis. The follow up 'Next Steps and Information' letter (formerly called 'Telephone Assessment Report'), and this email newsletter, include a range of local and national signposting to help you ensure that your child or young person is understood and supported, wherever they are on their assessment journey.

If you would like to tell us about your experience with the service, and let us know what would be useful for you, please contact the Wiltshire SPA on 0300 247 0090 (lines open between 9am-5pm, and calls charged at a local rate).

The name of our service

From 1st April 2024 the Wiltshire Autism Assessment Service will be changing its name to the **Neurodevelopmental Pathway**. This change of name reflects that many children and young people are also referred for assessment of possible ADHD. Going forward we will be working more closely with our colleagues from Bath and North East Somerset, to share skills and expertise across the region to offer multidisciplinary assessment for autism and ADHD.

Additional information and signposting

Autism Central offers resources for parents and carers including learning materials, articles, free online sessions and a newsletter. Their "guidance" page offers information on a wide range of topics including friendships, eating, extra support at school.



On their "find help" section you can access free online information sessions for families in the South West including topics including all about autism, support in education, sensory processing and anxiety.

Autism Central also offer virtual drop ins with other parents where you can ask questions.

<https://www.autismcentral.org.uk/>

The Wiltshire Parent Carer Council (WPCC) can provide advice about local sources of support and information for families of children with special educational needs.

https://www.wiltshireparentcarercouncil.co.uk/en/Contact_us



Please don't forget to tell us about any address, telephone number, school, or family changes so that we can keep our records up to date. If you or your child change your mind about continuing with the diagnostic assessment you can call the Single Point of Access on 0300 247 0090 to let us know.

If you wish to unsubscribe from this newsletter, please call the number above or email us on vcl.wiltshirespa@nhs.net