

# **AUTISM ASSESSMENT REFERRAL GUIDE**

## ***FOR PARENTS AND CARERS***

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**CLEAR, SIMPLE, AND SUPPORTIVE INFORMATION FOR ALL FAMILIES.**

SEE POTENTIAL, JOIN THE CHANGE

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# WELCOME

## WELCOME TO CAUDWELL CHILDREN

**At Caudwell Children, we understand how important it is to get the right support for your child. Our autism assessments are:**

**Specialist-led:** Delivered by a compassionate and experienced team of multi-disciplinary professionals including Clinical Psychologists, Speech and Language Therapists, Specialist Nurses, Occupational Therapists and Paediatricians.

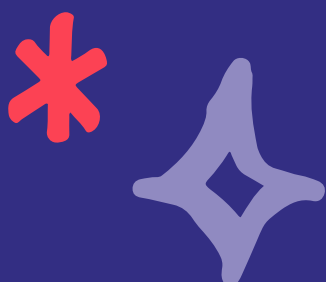
**Family-focused:** We guide you every step of the way, providing resources and post-assessment support tailored to your family's needs.

**Compliant with National Guidance:** Assessments aligned with National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE), recognised and accepted by schools, the NHS, and other professionals.

**Neurodiversity-affirmative:** We take a strengths-based approach tailored to each individual child, recognising their unique strengths and talents alongside any areas of difficulty or development needs.

**Affordable:** Families who meet the charity's financial criteria can access a funded assessment with a contribution of £500. For families who do not meet the criteria, the self-funded cost of the assessment is £2,500. Both options can be paid in instalments, with full payment required before the assessment day.

Our goal is to make this process as simple, clear, and supportive as possible for every family.



# WHAT IS AUTISM?

The formal medical diagnosis is known as 'Autism Spectrum Disorder', and is described as a lifelong developmental disability.

At Caudwell Children, however, we take a more Neurodiversity affirmative view of Autism, instead considering this part of the **natural variation across humans** in the way our brains work and process the world (known as Neurodiversity). Autism is therefore a different neurotype, rather than a 'condition' to be 'treated'. Autistic people may show differences in the way they communicate, interact, and experience the world around them. **Every autistic person is unique**, with their own strengths and challenges.

At Caudwell Children, we believe in empowering families and celebrating each child's individuality to help them reach their potential.

## How to Recognise Signs of Autism

Autism can look different for every child, but some common signs include:

- \* **Communication differences:** Differences in their speech or use of language, which can lead to challenges or misunderstandings with others at times.
- \* **Social challenges:** Differences in the way they initiate or respond to social interactions which can lead to difficulties navigating friendships or playing with others.
- \* **Repetitive behaviours:** Showing a preference for doing the same activity over and over, such as lining up toys, or repeating the same phrases.
- \* **Sensory differences:** Showing sensitivities to certain sensory input (e.g. an aversion to loud noises, bright lights, or certain textures), and/or seeking out certain sensory input (e.g. liking strong/firm hugs or touching soft fabrics)

If you're unsure, our team is here to help you decide whether an assessment is right for your child.

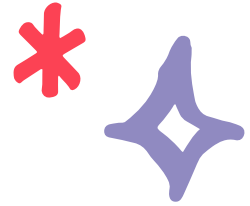
## Why Seek an Autism Assessment?

A diagnosis can:

- \* Help you understand your child better, gaining a holistic picture of their strengths and support needs.
- \* Open doors to educational and health support.
- \* Help you and school (or others around your child) to target adaptations and interventions to specific areas of need.
- \* Provide your child with a sense of self-understanding, helping them embrace who they are and their unique strengths.
- \* Provide you with tools and resources to support your child's growth and well-being.

At Caudwell Children, we aim to make this process stress-free and provide practical next steps after the assessment.

# HOW TO START



## HOW TO START THE AUTISM ASSESSMENT REFERRAL PROCESS

At Caudwell Children, we aim to make the autism assessment process as straightforward and supportive as possible. Follow these steps to begin your journey:

### Step 1: Check Your Eligibility

Our autism assessments are available for:

- \* **Age:** Children aged 4-11 years.
- \* **Location:** Families living in the UK. (Please note: Day Two of the assessment must be attended in person at our sensory-friendly centre.)
- \* **Funding Criteria:** To apply for charity funding, you must either:
  - \* Be in receipt of means-tested benefits, or
  - \* Have a household income of £60,000 or less (excluding benefits).

In both cases, household savings must not exceed £16,000.

- \* **Previous Assessments:** Children who have not previously attended an autism assessment, unless a past report clearly recommends further reassessment or review.

### Step 2: Get a Referral

A healthcare, education, or social care professional who knows your child well must refer your child.

Who can refer?

- \* Your child's GP.
- \* A teacher or Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) at your child's school or education setting.
- \* Staff at your child's nursery or Early Years setting.
- \* A social care professional (e.g. social worker or family support worker).
- \* Any other healthcare professional (e.g. psychologists, psychological therapists, mental health practitioners, nurses, speech and language therapists)
- \* The professional who refers your child must not be directly related to the child (e.g. parent, grandparent, aunt, uncle etc.).

Speak to a professional who knows your child well and explain your concerns. If they agree with the need for further assessment, they can guide you and complete the referral for you. If they need further information on their part in this process they can access the relevant section of our [website: www.caudwellchildren.com/changing-lives/how-we-can-help/autism-services/autism-assessments/make-a-referral](http://www.caudwellchildren.com/changing-lives/how-we-can-help/autism-services/autism-assessments/make-a-referral)

### Step 3: Submit Your Application

Once the referral has been completed by a professional, it will be sent to our team. We'll review it to ensure all necessary information is included.

## HOW TO START THE REFERRAL PROCESS

### Step 4: Confirm Your Funding Option

You can choose the funding option that best suits your family, with instalment plans available before the assessment day:

- \* **Charity-Funded Assessment:** Eligible families will contribute £500 towards the cost of the assessment.
- \* **Self-Funded Assessment:** For families who are not eligible for funding, the full cost of the assessment is £2,500.

### Step 5: Complete Paperwork

Our Family Support Team will guide you through completing:

- \* A child profile - a questionnaire to provide insights into your child's strengths and needs.
- \* School questionnaires to gather feedback from your child's teachers. If your child does not attend school, another setting can provide their feedback (e.g. previous educational setting, extracurricular activities/clubs/groups)
- \* A Child Support Plan to ensure the assessment process is safe and tailored to your child's needs.

**Delays can occur when waiting for paperwork to be completed and returned, so parents or carers can support by prompting and chasing efficient return of these.**

### Step 6: Book Your Assessment

Once your paperwork is complete and payment or funding is confirmed, we'll book your child's assessment.

**Day One:** A comprehensive virtual interview with parents/carers to discuss your child's development, behaviour, and strengths in detail.

**Day Two:** An in-person assessment at our sensory-friendly centre, conducted by our experienced multidisciplinary team. All assessment sessions required for your child are completed on the day with all the different professionals contributing as needed (e.g. Psychologists, Speech and Language Therapists, Nurses and Paediatrician). This allows for efficient completion of all aspects of the autism assessment across the 2 days.

### Step 7: Receive Your Results

Approximately 4-6 weeks after the assessment, you'll receive:

- \* A tailored feedback meeting where a clinician will explain the results of the assessment alongside the specific strengths and needs identified for your child. This can be conducted in person or online dependent upon your preferences.
- \* A comprehensive report which details the outcome of the assessment, any diagnosis provided and recommendations tailored specifically for your child or family's needs.

### Step 8: Access Post-Assessment Support

Your journey doesn't end after the assessment outcome. We provide:

- \* **12 Months of Family Support:** Practical advice and guidance to help you access services and resources.

- \* **Workshops:** Free credits for use on our suite of workshops that can help support you with key areas of need for your child, whilst helping your family plan for the future.
- \* **Optional Occupational Therapy Services:** Sessions to help your child build skills and confidence should this be identified as a need for them.

## WHY NICE GUIDELINES MATTER:

Choosing an autism assessment service that aligns with the **National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE)** guidelines ensures you are accessing care of the highest quality. But what does this mean for you and your family?

- \* **Evidence-Based Standards:** NICE guidelines are developed by healthcare experts and based on the latest research. This means every aspect of your child's assessment, from the methods we use to the recommendations we provide, follows proven, evidence-based practices.
- \* **Trusted by Professionals:** A NICE compliant assessment is recognised by schools, healthcare providers, and social care professionals. This ensures the results are credible and can be used to access the support your child needs, such as educational plans or therapeutic services.
- \* **Comprehensive Team Approach:** NICE emphasises the need for a multidisciplinary team approach. At Caudwell Children, our team includes Paediatricians, Clinical Psychologists, and Speech and Language Therapists, working together to provide a thorough and holistic understanding of your child's strengths and challenges.
- \* **Family-Focused Care:** The NICE guidelines prioritise clear communication and family support throughout the assessment process. We're here to answer your questions, guide you step by step, and provide practical resources tailored to your family's needs.
- \* **Consistency and Confidence:** By adhering to NICE guidelines, our assessments meet national standards for quality, ensuring you receive a reliable and consistent service you can trust.

By choosing Caudwell Children, you can be confident that your child's assessment is held to the highest standards, providing the clarity and support your family needs to move forward positively.

## NEED HELP?

If you have any questions or need guidance at any stage, our team is here to support you.

**Call: 0345 300 1348**

**Email: [family.support@caudwellchildren.com](mailto:family.support@caudwellchildren.com)**

Together, we'll help your child unlock their full potential.



 0345 300 1348

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