



## Adult Autism Assessment Team (AAAT) Update – April 2021

### The Team

The ambition was for the AAAT to be a multidisciplinary team. The team was recruited at the end of 2020 and started working together mid-January 2021. The team has admin and project support and all clinical members of the team work 4 hours a week together (0.1 WTE). In the team we have:

- 1 x project support (0.5 WTE)
- 1 x admin support
- 1 x clinical lead/occupational therapist
- 1 x nurse
- 1 x clinical psychologist
- 1 x speech and language therapist
- 1 x occupational therapist

During the start of 2021 the team worked together to develop a sustainable pathway for adults seeking an autism assessment in Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire HSCPs.

Please see Appendix 1 for information on the clinical pathway for those using the service.

Having contacted other teams and reviewed the processes used by other teams nationally, we decided we would take a self-referral and triage model to reduce the need for individuals to approach GPs and other health professionals to look for help during a time of reduced capacity during the Covid-19 pandemic. We are also working closely with one of the leading third sector partners, the Aberdeen One Stop Shop, to ensure



that we are asking for advice when setting up the pathway. This has been invaluable and we believe has been integral to how the pathway is developing. The One Stop Shop (OSS) has developed a post diagnostic group for adults and this is working well and allows an outflow from the AAAT. The OSS are also developing an post-diagnostic information pack for those receiving a diagnosis with our team.

## Processes

The team meet every Tuesday afternoon together and we have allocated time slots to ensure we have space for triage clinic appointments, assessment appointments, time for multidisciplinary assessment/diagnostic discussion, supervision and team business/planning.

We communicated with GPs and other health partners about how to help individuals access our service in January 2021 and at the time of writing, we plan to launch a social media communication to say that we are now widely open for self referral. Information about the team and access to a self referral is on the Grampian hi-net public pages. We also plan to get the referral form and process on the Clinical Grampian Guidance intranet page for GPs (this is underway).

## Feedback

We hope to incorporate formal feedback into our processes but until then, all we have is anecdotal feedback from our partners at the one stop shop about how positive the response has been in the autistic community to the setting up of the team and the processes we are using for access to the team. Those we have seen for triage, so far, have been very positive in terms of their ability to access the service, the information we have given them



about the assessment process and feeling that the triage appointment has been better than filling out lots of questionnaires prior to an appointment.

## Data

Fortunately, we had quick support from the Quality Improvement and Assurance Team in NHS Grampian, to develop a clinical database for the team that would help us to gather key data as the team and pathway progresses. We have limited data so far but the data points we will be able to get from the database are:

- Number of referrals
- Wait from referral to first appointment
- Wait while on waiting list
- Number of contacts per assessment
- Wait from first appointment to last appointment
- Wait from referral accepted to diagnosis shared
- Diagnostic rate from total referrals
- Proportion of referrals declined based on screening (3 referrals declined so far 1) moved address 2) looking for ongoing support having already had a diagnosis)
- Onward pathways

## Data so far:

- 79 referrals (30% self referral, 30% CMHT, 20% GP)
- 55% female
- 58% City

## Next Steps



Whilst our focus in the first 6 months has been to get the clinical pathway up and running, we want to focus next on training others about autism and looking to skill others in autism screening and assessment.

*Lizzy Archibald, Clinical Lead  
On Behalf of the Adult Autism Assessment Team*



## Appendix 1

### Adult Autism Assessment Team (AAAT)

#### Information Leaflet

#### **Why?**

It has been recognised for some time now that an autism assessment service is needed for adults.

#### **What?**

The AAAT started in January 2021 to provide an autism assessment service for adults in Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire. The service is for assessment and diagnosis of autism only.

#### **Who?**

We are a multidisciplinary team. There are five clinical staff, Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Nurse Practitioner, Clinical Psychology, and Julia, our team secretary.

#### **When?**

The team work together on Tuesday afternoons but Julia is available out with this time to answer any queries.

#### **How?**

Our assessment process is described on the next page



## How?

Our assessment process:

### Referral

Access to the team is through completion of the referral form.



### Triage

On receiving the referral, you will be offered a triage appointment. This appointment is for a maximum of 30 minutes. We will ask you for some general information about you and why an assessment of autism is important to you.

Appointments will be via Near Me (video call) or telephone call. We are unable to see people face to face at the moment except in exceptional circumstances due to Covid 19 restrictions.





### **Screening**

If, after our triage conversation, we decide to progress onto assessment stage, we will then send you a screening questionnaire and a consent form for you to complete and return.



### **Waiting List**

Once we receive your screening information and consent form, we will discuss this as a team and place you on the waiting list for assessment. We will write to you to let you know this has happened and the approximate wait for assessment.



### **Assessment**

The assessment process is likely to be over a few appointments and will involve finding out about you as a child and how things are for you now.





### **Diagnostic Decision**

We aim to let you know about a diagnostic decision as soon as we can and this will include a report about the information you gave us and what the decision is.



**Discharge**

*(Please see over)*



### Team Contact Details

Please do not hesitate to get in touch with us if you are worried about any part of the process or need more information. Our contact details are:

**Email:** [gram.adultautismteam@nhs.scot](mailto:gram.adultautismteam@nhs.scot)

**Post:** Julia Fry (AAAT), Fulton Building (First Floor), Royal Cornhill Hospital, Cornhill Road, Aberdeen, AB25 2ZH

**Telephone:** 01224 557663 (Please note that this is a voicemail service only. Leave a message and we will get back to you).

We look forward to working with you.

*Adult Autism Assessment Team*