

Adult Autism Assessment Team (AAAT) Update – July 2022

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 (0.1WTE). In the team we have:

- 1 x project support (0.5 WTE)
- 1 x admin support (15 hours)
- 1 x clinical lead/occupational therapist
- 2 x nurse
- 1 x clinical psychologist (currently vacant)
- 2 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.

In May 2022 we opened the pathway to Moray HSCP and employed two new members of staff to cover Moray.

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 local third sector partners when we build the pathway. This has been invaluable and we believe has been integral to how the pathway is developing. Autism Understanding Scotland have developed a post diagnostic group for adults and this is working well and allows an outflow post discharge from the AAAT. Autism Understanding Scotland have also worked closely with us to develop a post diagnostic information booklet.

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 key stakeholders about how to help individuals access our service in January 2021. Information about the team and access to a self referral is on the Grampian hi-net public pages. This is also available on the Clinical Grampian Guidance intranet page for GPs.

Feedback

We hope to build formal feedback into our pathway in the near future. We managed to ask for feedback from a small sample of those who have attended for assessment prior to presenting a poster about the team at the NHS Scotland Conference. This feedback was very positive (see attached poster)

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 some data so far:

- 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
- Onward pathways

Data so far:

- 786 referrals (Most are self referral followed by CMHT and GP)
- 62% female
- 45% City, 45% Aberdeenshire, 6% Moray, 4% missing data
- diagnostic rate 85%
- average wait is between 210 and 412 days from referral to first assessment
- average length of assessment is three appointments

Next Steps

Whilst our focus in the first year has been to get a pathway up and running and training all staff who are providing the service. We have completed two CPD sessions and hope to record this to share with other teams. We are looking at how to get through the wait list as efficiently as possible as the wait time is not satisfactory at the moment.

*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

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