



**Royal Free London**  
NHS Foundation Trust

# **Team for the Assessment of Autism and Social Communication (TAASC)**

**Information for  
Parents and Carers**

## **Are you concerned about your child's social communication and interaction?**

## **Has someone in your child's care system raised concerns?**

Our multi-professional Team for the Assessment of Social Communication & Autism (known as TAASC) provides assessment and support for children up to 7 years old registered with a GP in Barnet.

This leaflet explains how we assess children for autism and social communication concerns by getting to know your child's strengths and challenges both at home with you and also in other settings.

We then discuss with you if your child needs further specialist assessment to explore whether they have autism or some other differences in their development.



You can learn more about autism and social communication differences at:

[www.autism.org.uk](http://www.autism.org.uk)

and at the **Signs of Autism in Children** section at the back of this leaflet.

## Step 1 Child Development Clinic (CDC)

Your child's GP, Health Visitor or Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo) can refer your child to the Child Development Clinic (CDC). Parents can also refer directly. The referral form is available here:

[www.barnet.gov.uk/working-children-barnet/practitioner-guidance/child-development-service/child-development-service](http://www.barnet.gov.uk/working-children-barnet/practitioner-guidance/child-development-service/child-development-service)

At the Child Development Clinic the doctor will:

- take a detailed history about your child from birth to now.
- observe your child playing and joining in with activities.

They will agree a care plan with you and may refer your child on to other professionals such as a Pre-school Teacher or a Speech & Language Therapist. They may also refer for blood tests. It is usually at this appointment that you will be given this leaflet.

Occasionally, if you and all professionals are in agreement, your child might be given a diagnosis of autism at this point.

However, usually the doctor will talk to you about a possible autism diagnosis or social communication differences and, with your consent, will refer your child to our **TAASC Panel**.



## Step 2 TAASC Panel – 2-3 months later

When your child is referred to the TAASC panel we will gather all the available information about your child. We will agree with you who we contact to ask for information. This will normally include the Pre-school Teaching Team or nursery or school as appropriate and other professionals working with your child.

This information gathering can take varying amounts of time depending on the response we get and whether your child is waiting to see other professionals or has only recently begun nursery or school. Your support in getting information can help speed up this process.

The TAASC Panel are autism specialists and consists of a Community Paediatrician, a Speech and Language Therapist and a Pre-School Teacher. Together they consider all the information about your child and decide whether:

- There is sufficient information to conclude or exclude a diagnosis. *Your Paediatrician will then contact you to discuss the outcome and to talk about support.*
- There is insufficient information to conclude or exclude a diagnosis. *We will write to you to let you know that we are still trying to gather more information. Once we have this the panel will review again.*
- Your child needs a more in-depth assessment at our specialist **TAASC Clinic**. *We will write to you to confirm you have been referred to the TAASC clinic and then a member of the TAASC Clinic team will call to discuss arrangements.*

## Step 3 TAASC Clinic – 1-2 months later

The TAASC Clinic is a play-based observation with two clinicians. It may be virtual or in person. With your consent, other professionals can also observe. The clinicians will explain the process and answer your questions.

At the end of the TAASC Clinic, the clinicians will consider all the information and observations. They will then meet with you again to discuss their conclusions. They will tell you whether your child meets the criteria for autism or not and explain the support services available in Barnet. Sometimes, they may suggest

- further observations
- waiting for a period of time to see how your child develops
- further referrals to explore alternative diagnoses.

You will receive a detailed report and advice about available support. They will also offer a follow-up discussion a few weeks later.

### Some useful websites

**Barnet Services** <https://www.barnetlocaloffer.org.uk/>  
**Barnet Parent Carer Forum** [www.barnetpcf.org.uk](http://www.barnetpcf.org.uk)

### What if you don't want a diagnosis?

You can decide if you agree with the clinical team's conclusions. We will respect your decision and discuss with you the implications of not accepting the diagnosis in regard to support for your child. The report will state that your child meets the diagnostic criteria for autism, but not conclude the diagnosis.

All TAASC Clinic reports are sent to your GP but it is your choice who else receives a copy.

# Signs of Autism in Children

## Autism in young children

Signs of autism in young children include:

- not responding to their name
- avoiding eye contact
- not smiling when you smile at them
- getting very upset if they do not like a certain taste, smell or sound
- repetitive movements, such as flapping their hands, flicking their fingers or rocking their body
- not talking as much as other children
- repeating the same phrases

## Autism in older children

Signs of autism in older children include:

- not seeming to understand what others are thinking or feeling
- finding it hard to say how they feel
- liking a strict daily routine and getting very upset if it changes
- having a very keen interest in certain subjects or activities
- getting very upset if you ask them to do something
- finding it hard to make friends or preferring to be on their own
- taking things very literally – for example, they may not understand phrases like "break a leg"

## Autism in girls and boys

Autism can sometimes be different in girls and boys.

For example, autistic girls may be quieter, may hide their feelings and may appear to cope better with social situations.

This means autism can be harder to spot in girls.

**From:** <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/autism/signs/children/>

## NOTES:



## To contact the Barnet Child Development Clinic:

Barnet Child Development Service  
Edgware Community Hospital,  
Burnt Oak Broadway,  
HA8 0AD

Email: [rf-tr.barnetasd@nhs.net](mailto:rf-tr.barnetasd@nhs.net)

Phone no.: 020 7794 0500 Extn: 26457 (Mon-Fri 9am – 5pm)

For more information about the Community Paediatric Service at the Royal Free London, please visit our website: [www.royalfree.nhs.uk](http://www.royalfree.nhs.uk)

### Your feedback

If you have any feedback on this leaflet please email:  
[rf-tr.barnetasd@nhs.net](mailto:rf-tr.barnetasd@nhs.net)

### Alternative formats

This leaflet is also available in large print. Please let us know if you need this leaflet in another format – for example Braille, a language other than English or audio

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