

The Neuro Developmental Pathway for Lancashire

OFSTED CQC Joint Inspection December 2024 [10327156 Lancashire Area SEND 80480 final clean-144735.docx](#)

The report highlighted: “Pathways into neurodivergent assessment and diagnosis are not working well. This results in long delays and families becoming increasingly distressed. Children and young people’s circumstances often worsen while they wait. There is significant variability across Lancashire in the timeliness of assessment. The ICB recognises that gaps remain in commissioning these pathways, and there have been such gaps for some time. It is currently working on redesigning the neurodivergent pathway. In the meantime, these excessive waits are compounded by limited access to helpful support while children, young people and their families wait for assessment.

As a result of the huge delays for autism and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder assessment, parents and carers are turning to private assessment. However, there is no local agreement between providers that allows NHS paediatricians to safely sanction the use of medication identified within some of these assessments. This is because the paediatricians have not completed the assessment themselves. In these instances, health professionals find themselves drawn into appeals and tribunals. Ultimately, this creates further delays, which have a detrimental effect on children and young people’s health and well-being”

ICB Commissioning intentions plan 2025/26 [LSC Integrated Care Board :: Commissioning intentions 2025-26](#) “A redesign of the neurodevelopmental pathway across Lancashire and South Cumbria with the aim of addressing increase in demand, the inconsistent offer, long waits and meet the requirements of guidance and the SEND inspection.” It goes on to say “**Children and young people**

There are a range of services in scope for paediatric services ranging from the neurodevelopmental pathway, specialist nursing, speech and language therapy and the coming together of acute paediatric provision. The overall aim is to make sure we deliver sustainable services with a robust flexible workforce model.

We will reduce the current variation in provision and the subsequent differences in the outcomes for children, young people and their families across Lancashire and South Cumbria. The new models will provide services as close to home as possible, exploiting innovative digital solutions to maximise access.”

Lancashire SEND Partnership Priority Action Plan [Lancashire SEND priority action plan - Lancashire County Council](#)

Point 3 Leaders from the ICB and local authority should continue to work together with urgency to address the delays and gaps in service provision within the current neurodivergent pathway. This is to meet the full range of needs of children and young people with SEND across Lancashire.

Following the OFSTED Inspection report and subsequent priority action plan development, the Integrated Care Board and the Lancashire SEND Partnership are working together to redesign the way families access support and assessment for conditions such as Autism and ADHD. There have been a number of workshops and workstreams created in order to develop a more efficient way for families to access the right support at the right time.

Neuro Developmental Pathway aims to

- To develop a needs led support offer using a profiling tool (in development)
- Prevent barriers to access
- Integrate the offer with the wider systems including Lancashire Local offer, family hubs and education services.
- Support needs to be bespoke to individuals and allow flexibility
- Mix of on the ground support as well as wider system resources such as websites.
- Include parents with lived experience as pathway navigators to offer support and guidance

This will take some time to develop and map out what services are already available and what needs to be provided. Currently, there are workstreams being developed on a range of areas to help design this service. Current ambitious work plan shows a 3 year time frame with lots of work to do to ensure the offer is robust and meets the needs and expectations of families and services across the whole of Lancashire.

Current draft service spec shows support and assessment for Autism, ADHD, possibly FASD (Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder), Attachment and ACE's.

There is an expectation that this will be extremely costly and time consuming so care is being taken to ensure the right people are involved in the conversations and development from the start. Using NICE guidance and best practice where appropriate, a service will be designed to ensure the appropriate assessments happen in the most efficient way possible for children and young people.