

Adult Autism: Prioritisation Criteria

The waiting list for a diagnostic assessment can be long and the service receives requests to prioritise or expediate referrals. The service are rarely able to meet these requests. The criteria outlining how we prioritise referrals and the evidence required are found below.

Please note any requests for prioritisation must come with the evidence required or they will be declined. We aim to offer prioritised assessments within 6 months.

Reasonable adjustments are often available prior to a formal diagnostic assessment of Autism and we encourage this to be explored in the first instance.

Criteria

The client is at risk of losing a place on or failing an educational programme.

Client should see learning support service in first instance and confirm that university is not able to provide assessment and support strategies.

The client is in a current legal process involving care proceeding for their child (not divorce/child-custody proceedings) and this is felt to relate to Autism symptoms

The client is in a legal proceeding involving the collection of evidence by the police or judiciary services and their neurodivergence including communication difficulties are likely to impact quality of evidence.

There is a clear and unequivocal clinical reason given by a consultant psychiatrist within BHFT (or in the case of an inpatient, only where a decision on long-term hospital placement rests on the presence or absence of Autism) why Autism assessment is crucial to management. This would not apply unless the consultant plans to continue to manage the client's overall mental health.

Formal safeguarding or MARAC process has requested priority due to impact of potential autism.

Client has recently been able to successfully control substance misuse and is considered to have a window of suitability to assess and treat.

Client is a care leaver (adult who spent time in care under the age of 18. Such care could be in foster care, residential care (mainly children's homes) or other arrangements *outside the immediate or extended family*) and a prioritised assessment/medication is considered essential to support future educational or employment prospects.

Evidence required

Letter from their educational provider to support that difficulties associated with potential autism will likely lead to failing or losing a place

Copy of relevant document from social services / court.

Letter from Consultant.

Letter from Safeguarding team

Evidence of priority substance dependency and rationale from clinical team.

Clear evidence of this status in GP or BHFT records OR letter from appropriate professional.

The following are not reasons for prioritising an Autism assessment:

- Patient is acutely unwell, in mental health crisis, or presenting acute risks
- Complaints about waiting list.
- Moving out of area and wanting to be seen before move.
- Being a staff member or NHS employee.

We do not offer assessments for people who have accessed a right to choose or private assessment and is wishing for a NHS assessment.

- Second opinion.

Prospect Park Referrals

We have an agreement with Prospect Park to provide one *autism* assessment per month for clients where potential autism is contributing to the challenges in placement or who are awaiting diagnosis to support discharge planning. Prospect Park refer these clients directly to the team.