**Autism Information for Children, Young People and Parents**

As you or your child are experiencing some difficulties and to help with these ahead of an Autism Assessment we have taken the opportunity to compile a list of resources that we feel may be helpful.

We are sorry for the length of your wait. Be assured we are currently working on reducing our waiting times.

*We try to see autism as a difference rather than a disorder. Some people with autism say we should think of it like left-handedness. When a baby is born, we can’t tell if they will be left-handed. We expect them to be right-handed, because most people are. At some point (usually well before they start school), we notice they are choosing to use their left hand. We all know about left-handedness, and we don’t try and force them to use their right. If they find it tricky learning from a right-hander how to write, sew, play guitar etc, we understand why and we help them. It’s great having a lefthander on the left wing in a sports team, and they can get a better angle on some DIY jobs….but if you force them to do everything right handed, they don’t do so well.*

*While autism is more complicated than left-handedness, there are similarities. We can’t spot autism at birth. We expect people not to have autism, and then at some point we notice they have some “atypical” ways of doing things. If we don’t understand, and keep forcing them to do everything exactly as if they don’t have autism, they don’t do so well, but once we do understand and we change our expectations and change the ways we help them, we find some of those ‘atypical’ features are real strengths.*

The assessment you are waiting for is important, but it’s not all about getting a yes/no answer (i.e. is this autism or not?). Just like some people are ambidextrous, or maybe kick with their right foot but write with their left hand, similarly some people have some features of autism but not so many that they actually have autism. We aim by our assessment to work out which of the features you/your child have/has, what you/they find easy and what you/they find difficult. That will help us be more specific when directing you to support. It doesn’t lead to a “cure”. We understand and accept left-handedness and don’t want to cure that, and would like the same to be true for autism.

While you wait for your assessment, it will be helpful to learn more about autism. We like these videos:

* “Understanding Autism” animation by Alex Amelines. *(4 minutes)*: [**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RbwRrVw-CRo**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RbwRrVw-CRo)
* “My Autism and Me” BBC Newsround special. 13 year-old Rosie talks about her autism, and about her brother Lenny who has autism and learning difficulty. Two other friends with autism also contribute, so a range of abilities is covered. *(14 and a half minutes)*:[**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ejpWWP1HNGQ**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ejpWWP1HNGQ)
* An interview with Chris Packham. He got a diagnosis of a type of autism (*Asperger’s syndrome*) as an adult, and talks about how he felt as a child/teenager not understanding why he was “different”. *(8 minutes)*:   
  [**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wvMsvCbZdDo**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wvMsvCbZdDo)
* Chris Packham documentary “Asperger’s and me”. (*1 hour)*:  
  [**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IjdEJdr-vfs**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IjdEJdr-vfs)
* Autism in girls and women: BBC Breakfast. *(7 minutes)*: [**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i4zMeIZfU-s**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i4zMeIZfU-s)

For understanding and advice about all sorts of issues, we recommend the National Autistic Society website. [**http://www.autism.org.uk/**](http://www.autism.org.uk/) (*Even if you/your child don’t/doesn’t have autism*, *the fact that you/they have been referred for assessment suggests that you/they have some of the features, and you will probably find the above website useful).*

Note at the top of the website you can select ‘country’ – click on Scotland to filter out information on the English education system etc. Click on “*about autism*” in the menu bar, and you will find all sorts of helpful advice on supporting communication, on behaviour management, family life and more. Also notice there is a search box, which will help you find specific advice e.g. about eating, sleep or toilet training.

People with autism are often “*atypical*” in the way they react to sensory input, such as noise and touch. Our occupational therapy team have developed this webpage to help you understand and respond to your/your child’s sensory profile:

[**https://www.nhsggc.org.uk/kids/life-skills/joining-in-with-sensory-differences/**](https://www.nhsggc.org.uk/kids/life-skills/joining-in-with-sensory-differences/)

The [**https://www.nhsggc.org.uk/kids/**](https://www.nhsggc.org.uk/kids/) website also has lots of other helpful information and resources. If you click the *“more”* menu on the right hand side, you can choose “*parents zone*” or “*KIDS zone*”.

If you live in the Glasgow City Council area then you can access support from the Glasgow City Carers Partnership (*0141 353 6504*). The Glasgow Carers Centres work in partnership with the NHS and the Autism Resource Centre (*ARC*) to offer post-diagnostic training to parents. In addition, the ARC now offers a pre-diagnostic training seminar for parents: you can register for “*Could it be Autism?*” (*CIBA*) by contacting the ARC (*0141 276 5252*).

**Whichever local authority area you live in, your local carer support organisation will be able to direct you to more information and support if needed. Ask at your doctor’s surgery how to contact local carer support.**