



Neurodevelopmental Pathway

Presented by:



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+ Foreword

I am delighted to be publishing Gibraltar's first Neurodevelopmental Pathway. This is a comprehensive strategy designed to meet the needs of our children and young people with neurodevelopmental conditions. The development of this pathway is something we have been working on for some time and which I was very keen to produce to ensure that every child in our community receives the support they need to thrive, irrespective of the challenges they face.

Neurodevelopmental conditions such as Autism Spectrum (AS) and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), among others, affect not just the individual child, but also their families, their education, and their future. As such, the Government has wanted to ensure that our approach is not only

clinically sound but also compassionate and tailored to the unique needs of each child.

This document outlines a clear and structured pathway that integrates the expertise of a multidisciplinary team, ensuring that every child receives the highest standard of care, from initial assessment through to ongoing support. Our commitment to a person-centred approach is at the heart of this strategy, recognising that a diagnosis, while important, is just one part of the journey.

This pathway is a product of extensive collaboration among professionals from various sectors, including in health, disability, education, and social care. I extend my deepest thanks to all the dedicated professionals who have contributed to the creation of this pathway.

Together, we are building a community where every child, regardless of their developmental challenges, can flourish and lead a fulfilling life.

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and curves.

**The Hon Gemma Arias-Vasquez MP
Minister for Health and Care**

+ Pathway Overview

This document outlines the pre-assessment, assessment and post assessment pathways for neurodevelopmental conditions.

Term	Meaning
Pre-assessment:	Provide needs-based support and gather information to inform a request for further assessment.
Assessment:	Carry out an assessment, where appropriate, based on the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidelines.
Post assessment	Provide support according to assessed needs.

Abbreviations have been used throughout this document, please turn to Page 9 for a full list of abbreviations and their definitions.

Objective

The aim is to provide a multi-agency approach to supporting children (under the age of 19) with neurodevelopmental conditions such as ASD, ADHD, Tics & Tourette's, Cerebral Palsy, Developmental Coordination Disorder and any other related conditions.

Summary

Neurodevelopmental conditions are a group of disorders in which the growth and development of the brain is affected. This can impact on an individual's communication, motor skills, emotions, behaviour, learning and memory. As different areas are affected, a team of professionals with different specialisms are required to work together. This is known as a Multidisciplinary Team (MDT). They are able to plan, review and support children / young people with neurodevelopmental conditions such as:

- Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
- Autism Spectrum
- Tics and Tourette's syndrome
- Cerebral Palsy
- Developmental Coordination Disorder

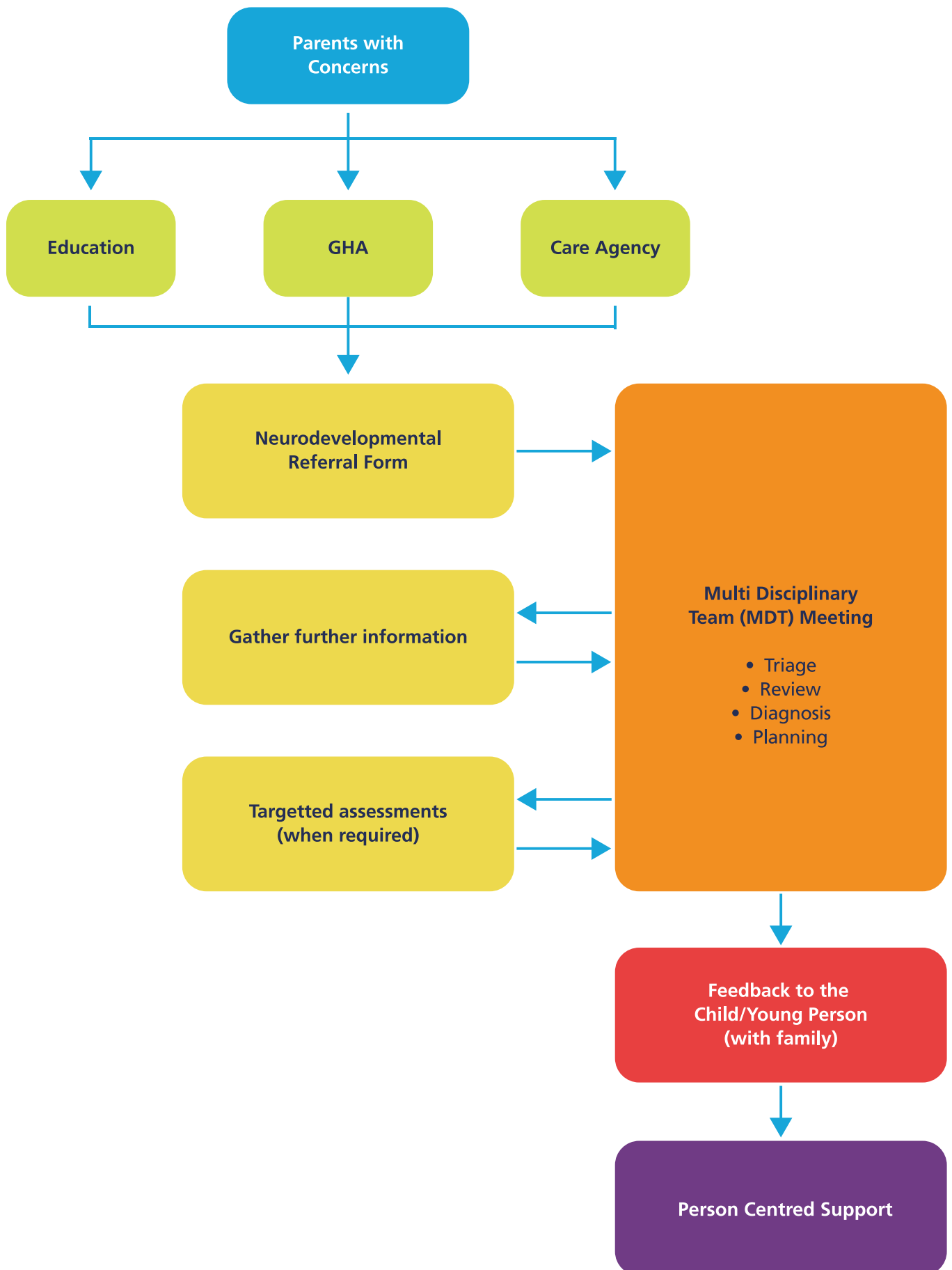
Assessment will be carried out by the Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) in GHA. This is a team of professionals within health in line with NICE Guidelines. i.e. Speech & language therapists, Occupational therapists, Consultant paediatrician, Psychiatrists etc, with information from the MDT as appropriate.

It is not always necessary to have a diagnosis as support is needs based and not reliant on diagnosis; however, we recognise that diagnosis can help children / young people and their families understand their position and access targeted support.

Core Principles

- The approach will be person centred and based on need;
- Multidisciplinary assessments and support strategies will be identified and agreed;
- Screening and diagnostic tools will be evidence-based and approved;
- Consistency and equity will be maintained;
- Information will be accessible and securely stored as per HMGoG's data protection policy;
- Professionals and families will work together collaboratively to optimise the child/young person's access to learning, intervention, community presence, overall well-being and quality of life.

+ Neurodevelopmental pathway



Parents with concerns are encouraged to seek help through professionals. Referrals will not be accepted directly from parents.

Referrals will be accepted from professionals in Education, the Care Agency or the GHA (for example general practitioners or health visitors). Parents should arrange to meet with any of these professionals to discuss their concerns.

Neurodevelopmental conditions affect functioning in multiple domains and hence it is important to gather information from a variety of sources. Therefore parents will be requested to give their consent for professionals to approach and discuss the child's care with other relevant agencies and departments where appropriate. For example, if a referral is received from the Care Agency, additional information might be needed from the child's teacher, SENCO or educational psychologist.

In conjunction with parents, professionals in schools, Care Agency and / or the GHA will complete the Neurodevelopmental referral form.

Further assessments may be required such as a physical examination, a blood test, genetic testing and any other relevant investigations.

For some children or young persons, targeted assessments may be administered.

The MDT of the neurodevelopmental service will be led by the GHA. It may include:

- Paediatricians
- Mental Health Practitioners
- Speech and Language Therapists
- Occupational Therapists
- Physiotherapists
- Admin Staff

Where appropriate, the MDT will request input from Education, Care Agency and other allied health professionals.

The MDT meetings will sequentially consider information from sources to arrive at a diagnosis and begin to plan a person centred support package for any unmet needs identified.

The relevant professionals (this will not be the whole MDT) will meet with the child/young person together with their family to explain the outcome of the assessments and offer a diagnosis if one has been reached. The family will be signposted to appropriate support and services.

Person centred support, specific to the child's unmet need, will be offered, with a multidisciplinary approach. Support will mainly be offered outside the Children's Health Centre, usually within the community, or at home or at school. A letter confirming the diagnosis will be shared with the family and stored in the patient's GHA clinical record. Parents will be encouraged to share our recommendations with the relevant agencies and / or departments as this will be beneficial to the child. Support plans will be reviewed and adjusted as and when required.

+ Resources

The screening, assessment and diagnostic tools used are dependent on the child/young person's needs. These will be listed in each individual pathway. All assessments/screening tools will be carried out by suitably trained persons.

Table of resources referred to and used during assessment.

+ Abbreviations

Abbreviation	
ASD	Autistic Spectrum
DSM-5	Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders- 5th Edition
ICD-10	International Classification of Diseases
GHA	Gibraltar Health Authority
OT	Occupational Therapy/ Therapist
MAT	Multi Agency Team
MDT	Multidisciplinary Team
NICE	National Institute for Health and Care Excellence
SENCo	Special Needs Co-Coordinator
SLT	Speech and Language Therapist

