

Children and Young Peoples NHS Neurodevelopmental Assessment Pathways in Doncaster

March 2026

1. What is the current service provision for NHS Neurodevelopmental Assessment pathways for 0-18 year olds in Doncaster?

In April 2025, changes were made to the way that Neurodevelopmental Assessment pathways were delivered in Doncaster, to ensure that children and young people could access quality and timely support for neurodiverse needs.

These changes were informed based on feedback received from Doncaster families and professionals, which made clear the need for services which focused on:

- Ensuring the right support (e.g. accessing services, information, advice and guidance) is available for families and individuals before and after neurodevelopmental diagnostic assessment
- Delivering services in the community, in settings comfortable for children and young people
- Reducing the waiting time for an Autism and/or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) diagnostic assessment

Since 1st April 2025, Rotherham, Doncaster and South Humber NHS Foundation Trust (RDaSH) have been the provider of Neurodevelopmental Assessment services for children and young people aged 5 to 18 years.

Doncaster and Bassetlaw Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation trust (DBTHFT) are the lead provider of Autism assessments for children aged up to 5 years.

Further information on both pathways, including details on who can refer, can be found on the Doncaster Local Offer webpages: <https://www.doncaster.gov.uk/services/schools/local-offer-autism-and-adhd-assessment-pathways>

2. How did the service changes impact on those children awaiting an assessment?

Any children who were aged 5 or over at the original point of their referral to DBTHFT for an Autism assessment were transferred to the new RDaSH Neurodevelopmental Assessment pathway for 5 to 18 year olds as part of the service changes in 2025.

From 1st April 2025, any child who has since turned 5 years old whilst on the waiting list for an Autism assessment with DBTHFT has remained with this provider.

3. In what circumstances would my child require a new referral to the RDaSH pathway?

DBTHFT no longer accept referrals for Autism assessment for children aged 5 or over. Since 1st April 2025, these referrals should be sent via the school-based referral pathway into RDaSH.

If a child has been referred to the Community Paediatric Clinic pathway at DBTHFT for suspected Developmental Needs, in some circumstances it may be indicated that an Autism assessment should also be considered. For a child aged over 5 years, this will require a new referral to be made into RDaSH as the provider of this service, via their school-based referral pathway.

This step is important as the RDaSH referral pathway ensures that important up-to-date information can be gathered about the child from a range of professionals, including education, and provides evidence of a graduated approach to supporting their neurodevelopmental needs. A school-led referral also ensures that the child is receiving the right support whilst awaiting assessment. For those children and young people who are outside mainstream education, RDaSH offer an Electively Home Educated referral pathway in Doncaster to support access to this service.

All referrals are reviewed by a multi-agency panel led by RDaSH, including a number of specialists, to ensure that diagnostic assessment is in the best interests of the child. Once the panel have reviewed all the information provided and approved the request for diagnostic assessment will a child then be placed on the waiting list.

Please note that DBTHFT cannot directly refer into the RDaSH Neurodevelopmental Assessment Pathway for 5 to 18 year olds.

4. Where do I go for support whilst awaiting an assessment?

Whilst your child is on the assessment pathway, RDaSH and DBTHFT can offer information, advice and signposting to services which will help you to further support your child's needs.

DBTHFT 0-5 Autism Assessment Pathway:

For families with children aged up to 5 years of age awaiting an Autism assessment, DBTHFT offer a range of support including a monthly newsletter (via Doncaster Local Offer) containing information on available local support, and regular attendance at parent/carer forums to discuss the service in detail and to answer individual queries.

RDaSH Neurodevelopmental Assessment Pathway (5 – 18 year olds):

When your child is accepted onto the RDaSH assessment pathway for 5 to 18 year olds, you will receive a letter of acceptance. This letter also includes signposting information to other sources of support available to you and your child whilst waiting for an assessment. RDaSH is currently in the process of reviewing the support available for patients and families while they wait. Once this review has been completed, further information will be released.

Contact details for both DBTHFT and RDaSH have also been provided within this FAQ document.

5. Where can I find more information about Neurodevelopmental Assessment Services in Doncaster?

Further information regarding Neurodevelopmental Assessment Services for Children and Young People in Doncaster can be found via the following webpages:

- **RDaSH Neurodevelopmental Assessment Pathway (5 – 18 year olds):**
<https://www.rdash.nhs.uk/services/childrens-and-young-peoples-autism-and-adhd-assessment/>
- **Doncaster Local Offer:**
<https://www.doncaster.gov.uk/services/schools/local-offer-autism-and-adhd-assessment-pathways>.

6. Who can I contact for more information?

If you need any further assistance or would like to discuss either of the services further, please contact:

- For queries relating to the new Neurodevelopmental Assessment Pathway for 5 to 18-year-olds: Doncaster Neurodevelopmental Service, RDaSH, Telephone: 01302 796191
- For queries relating to the 0-5 years Neurodevelopmental Autism Assessment Pathway: Anne Donkin, Service Manager, DBTHFT, Telephone: 01302 648168, email: anne.donkin@nhs.net