

# GDA Pathway Meeting

## Feedback

24th September 2024  
6.30pm  
Civic Building, Doncaster

### Present at the meeting:

- Doncaster Parents Voice
- Integrated Care Board (ICB)
- City of Doncaster Council SEND Transformation Team
- Parents/Carers & Doncaster Parents Voice members

### The aims of this meeting:

- To consult with parents/carers on their experiences of the GDA Pathway (in future to be known as Neurodiversity Pathway) in Doncaster
- To explain the road so far and the hopes for the future
- To provide parents/carers with an initial outline of the future Neurodiversity Pathway

## Introduction

Parents/carers were informed that it is time for a change with regards to the way the Neurodiversity Pathway (formerly known as GDA Pathway) is being delivered. It was acknowledged that the current delivery system isn't working as originally intended and parents/carers and children are facing unacceptable waiting times to receive a diagnosis, and little support is provided whilst waiting. The current GDA Pathway system was set up in 2014 and following on from covid, referrals to the pathway increased from 30 per month to 100 per month and as a result the system has become overwhelmed with demand for diagnosis.



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# GDA Pathway Meeting Feedback

## A new way forward

The new Neurodiversity Pathway was presented to parents/carers. **Please note that this is an initial outline of the pathway and it will likely change as the team implements feedback from meetings with parents/carers.**

One of the aims of the Neurodiversity Pathway is to reduce waiting times, but also to ensure that parents/carers and families who are on the pathway are supported from day one of being placed on a waiting list. More support will be provided to children/young people regardless of a diagnosis, it will be a needs led model and not a diagnosis led model. There will be Assessment Hubs, each of which will house a Multi Disciplinary Team (MDT) of professionals who will follow a child's progress/needs from nursery age.

The Assessment Hubs are where the assessments for autism and ADHD will take place. The assessments will not take place in a hospital setting. Schools will feed into the hubs. The new dual diagnosis pathway will be assessing for both ADHD and autism at the same time. The new system will give more control of the diagnosis pathway back to parents/carers and more support will be provided whilst children/young people are waiting for a diagnosis.

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## Parents/carers feedback

Parents/carers who attended the meeting provided detailed and powerful feedback of their experiences of the current GDA Pathway. Below is a snapshot of the topics raised:

School not identifying concerns/not supporting parents/carers with referrals

Uneducated school staff making decisions/using inappropriate language

No support prior, during or after assessment, or not understanding processes

GDA appointments are not in an appropriate setting. They are too long, too noisy, too hot, or too pressurised

Inappropriate language/conduct from medical professionals. Parents are not being heard

"The GDA process is very emotional"

Timescales and length of waiting

How are children that are 'masking' identified

Lack of MDT approach

Autism and ADHD require separate assessments

Schools having a lack of knowledge about autism and ADHD

# GDA Pathway Meeting Feedback

## Questions captured from the parent session on 24th September 2024

Children and young people on the ASD pathway have been on there for a while, why is this?

Pre-covid – there were 30 referrals per month, there has been a significant jump to over 100 per month post-covid. The system is not set up to be able to cope with and triage the new volumes of referrals

The CAMHS Service is overrun already, and we want them to be part of the hubs, is this unrealistic?

Clarity provided is that this isn't a school hub but the 4 hubs which will be based in localities. CAMHS will be integrating into the new hubs but as additional support only

How will we be able to access the hubs? Hundreds of families will want to access this service.

We will be working with the new provider to understand how parents and carers can link in. We would like to ensure each family has regular contact and is able to contact a named professional if required. It is important to keep in touch to ensure we can make changes if needed as we go through this journey. There will still be a waiting list - but these will be allocated out to the relevant localities

What support will there be for children and young people who already have a diagnosis?

We want to continue to support these children and young people and parents, but this needs working through to see how we do this

Can the hubs consider covering other diagnoses? E.g. Dyspraxia?

These diagnoses are through the alternative medical services, but we are considering these types of referrals in our planning and the most streamlined way of doing this

Who will make schools do the right thing? Schools are failing to recognise signs and symptoms, low support needs, high needs and masking girls. Schools are focusing on 'academy needs' not mental health needs

A School Handbook and Toolkit, Parental Toolkit, SENDCO Charter and continuing CPD for schools have been created as all part of the programme of SEND change in Doncaster and these should help schools and parents/carers to understand the system better and schools to understand children/young peoples needs better

Need to implement something to hold schools to account - they need to take responsibility

We are working with schools to develop awareness and we will bring them along with us on this journey. Whilst we acknowledge that Councils do not have the role of holding schools to account for provision, we are endeavouring to build a local model of support and challenge. We have introduced a team of SEND School Improvement Advisors who are working with schools to review their practices.

Will the new hubs include ADHD assessments?

Yes

# GDA Pathway Meeting Feedback

## What happens next?

All of the partners involved with shaping the pathway are working on the new model and will be using the feedback from parents, but we still need more parents' voices. There will be future meetings that parents can attend both in person and online to find out more about the progress of the pathway but also to feedback on their own experiences.

The next meeting for parents is on:

### **30th January 2025 at 10.00am at the Civic Building in Doncaster**

Booking is essential - please contact us on T: 01302 637566 or

E: [dpvevents@doncastercarers.org.uk](mailto:dpvevents@doncastercarers.org.uk) to book your place

### **30th January 2025 at 8.00pm via an online Teams meeting**

Booking is essential - please can you e-mail us at [dpvevents@doncastercarers.org.uk](mailto:dpvevents@doncastercarers.org.uk) and we will send you the link for the meeting

The meeting at **10.00am** will be a face-to-face meeting and will be held at the **Civic Building in Doncaster**, and for those parents who aren't able to attend there is an **online meeting** at **8.00pm**. Booking is essential, please see above for booking details.



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