

What are the diagnostic criteria?

All information obtained in the assessment is analysed using the World Health Organisation's diagnostic criteria for Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ICD10). This states that a child must have significant difficulties across three areas known as 'The triad of impairments' associated with Autism.

- Reciprocal Social Interaction
- Language and Communication
- Stereotyped Interests and Behaviours

Significant difficulties must be observed in all three areas and difficulties must be **pervasive** (present in all settings, e.g. home and school etc.) and **not explained by other factors**.

Each assessment session uses these criteria as the framework for interactions, and through play and age appropriate activities, identifies strengths and challenges encountered across all diagnostic areas. This includes your child's social interactions both verbally and non-verbally, their empathic and imaginative thinking, and their ability to cope flexibly with change and different sensory environments. Reciprocity and initiation of interactions are also closely observed.

About Oakdale

The Oakdale Centre was established in 1998 by a diverse group of dedicated practitioners with broad experience within mental healthcare.

Oakdale has developed a multi-disciplinary service with an ASD assessment team which typically includes:

- Clinical Psychologists
- Psychologists
- Speech and Language Therapists
- Other supporting professionals such as Educational Psychologists, Occupational Therapists, Social Workers and Creative Therapists.

If you'd like to find out more about the Oakdale Centre or the services we provide you can visit our website or call us on the number below. One of our team will be happy to talk to you in confidence and advise on the most appropriate help and support for you and/or your family. Whilst the Centre is based in Harrogate, we also work from other venues in the region.

Oakdale Centre

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Oakdale Autism Assessment

Information for parents
and carers



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Understanding neurodevelopmental difference

Autism is a neurodevelopmental difference. We refer to the 'autism spectrum' because each autistic child is different and has a different set of strengths and needs. There is no biological test for autism, and therefore diagnosis is made based on patterns of behaviour. Within the spectrum these behaviours (or signs of autism) can vary between one child and another and can change with age.

Some children have very clear patterns of behaviour that are associated with autism, and may be identified at an early age. Other children have less obvious signs of autism but are experiencing clear signs of anxiety or other difficulties.

Some children, particularly girls, are known to 'mask' their differences and may copy social behaviours to fit into a non-autistic world. However, many non-autistic children display some behaviours associated with autism, this does not mean they are autistic. When assessing for autism we look for the patterns in which these behaviours occur. Our autism specialists are skilled in assessing the wide-ranging spectrum of autistic difference.

Autism Assessment Steps

What you can expect to happen

1



Questionnaires – home and school

After your welcome call you will be asked to complete some questionnaires. We will also contact your child's school so they can contribute to the assessment.

3



Observation and Interaction

Following the initial assessment, a practitioner will undertake an observation with your child. This is a semi-structured assessment (ADOS-2) and involves some developmentally appropriate interactive activities.

5



Feedback

Following the panel review, you will be invited to attend a feedback meeting with one of our practitioners where we will share the outcome of the assessment and advise you about next steps.

2



Initial Assessment and Developmental Interview

You will be invited to attend an initial assessment with one of our practitioners. In this session we will gather some information about your current situation and ask in depth questions about your child's behaviours, focusing on the early years. This session can take up to two hours.

4



Multi-Disciplinary Panel

We will have gathered a substantial amount of information about your child. Our team will review this information and come to a conclusion about whether your child meets diagnostic criteria or not.