



# Coventry's Neurodevelopmental Pathway A Guide for SENCOs

# A New Pathway for Coventry

Collaborative; quicker and more supportive: Coventry's revised neurodevelopmental pathway has been developed by NHS and Local Authority colleagues, building on feedback from parents, schools and GPs.

The new pathway allows parents and professionals to work together more easily and put in place support for children and young people earlier on.

Key comments from parents, teachers and GPs are summarised below, together with the changes that have been made to the pathway as a result.



## Feedback

**“We only want support for our child. If the diagnosis means support then we will go through the assessment. However, if we could get support in a different way, we wouldn't necessarily want the diagnosis.”**

Parent



## Our Response

**We have created an early intervention pathway so that support can be provided without a diagnosis.**

**We have changed the way support from specialist teachers is commissioned so that it is no longer dependent upon a diagnosis.**

**We have created a Dimensions tool to help parents and professionals match the needs of children and young people to the support available in Coventry.**

**“School say they can't see any difficulties for my child in the school setting. They have refused to refer my child despite me saying that they are struggling at home. I then go to my GP and their referral doesn't have enough information on it to be accepted! We are stuck in a system and not being listened to.”**

Parent

**We have discussed this issue with Head Teachers and explained that schools are not expected to be 'gate keepers'.**

**We have provided additional information to GPs to speed up the referral process.**

## Feedback

“We are not always aware of the referrals made for ASD assessments in our school. Often the school is out of the loop. We want to be more involved as we know the child well and we want to support the family better.”

Head Teacher

“We sometimes don’t agree that a child needs to be referred in for an ASD assessment as we don’t have concerns at school.”

Head Teacher

“We aren’t really the best people to refer children for an autism assessment as we don’t really know the child after a 10 minute appointment. We refer in because we aren’t sure if schools can.”

GP

## Our Response

We have introduced a requirement for a member of the senior leadership team to countersign the referral form prior to it being sent to the Neurodevelopmental Service.

We have developed an early intervention pathway to help in cases where a child presents differently at home and in school.

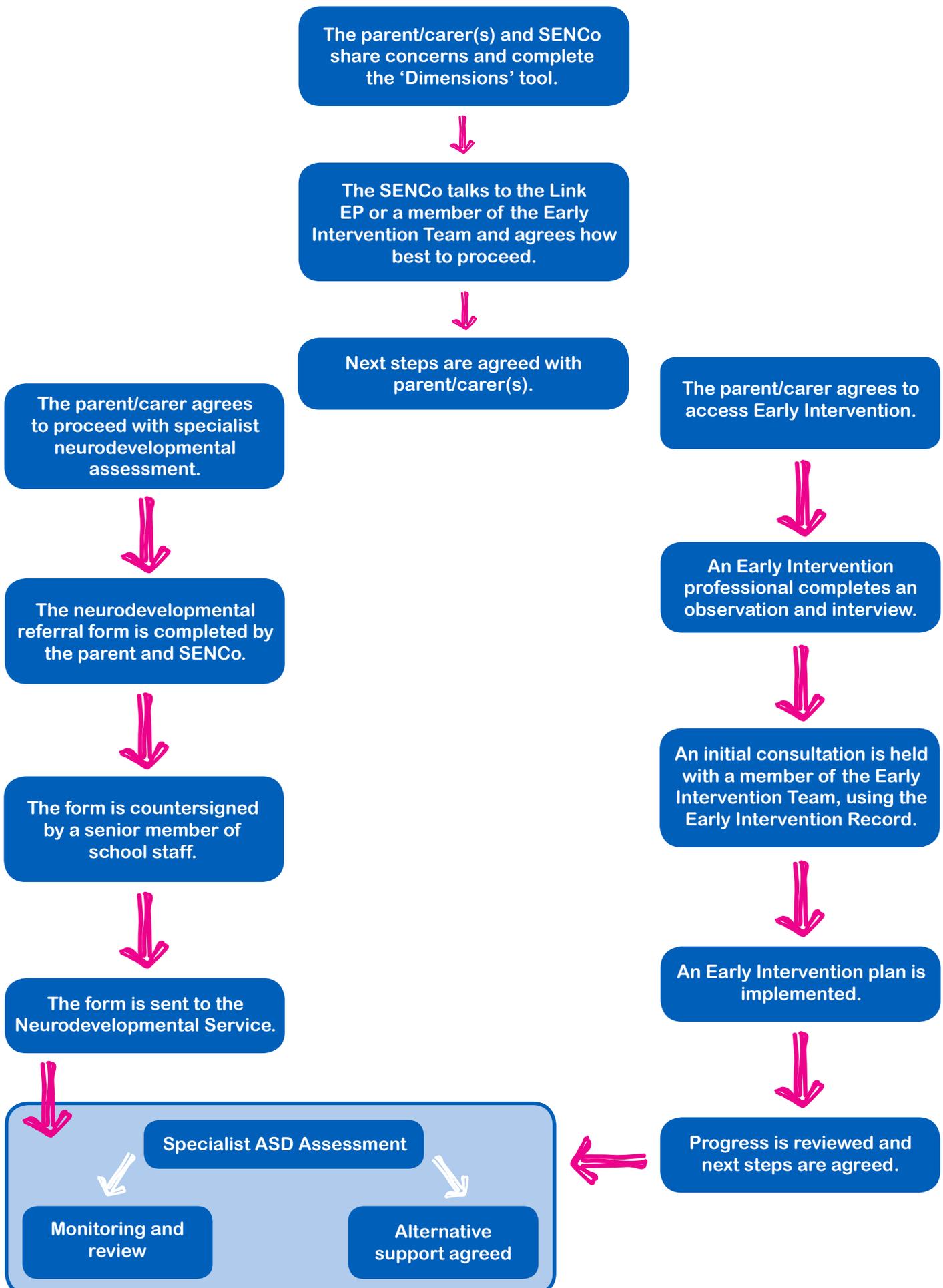
We have incorporated the Dimensions tool, to help parents and professionals gather more information about a child’s strengths and needs.

We have made the neurodevelopmental referral form available on the GP Gateway and encouraged GPs to give the referral form to parents when presenting at their surgery with concerns.

This guide will introduce you to the new pathway and outline the steps that you will need to take to help children and families progress through it.



# Overview of the Neurodevelopmental Pathway



# A Step By Step Guide to the Neurodevelopmental Pathway

## Step 1

### Sharing concerns

### Key considerations

Concerns about a student's social communication can arise at any time during their school career and from different sources.

In some cases, concerns may be first raised by parents. In other cases they may be raised by teachers, support staff or another professional such as a GP.

Regardless of who raises a concern, a discussion should take place between the parent/carer and a member of school staff, usually the SENCo.

Parental concerns should not be dismissed, even if no difficulties are apparent in school.

The Dimensions tool is a quick and easy way to gain a holistic understanding of a child's needs.

The information gathered through the Dimensions tool will be helpful for identifying the main areas of need and planning further assessment (if required).

### What do I need to do?

Meet with parents to discuss the student's social communication needs. You may find the parent/carer(s) leaflet helpful.

Gain consent from parents to discuss the student with an Educational Psychologist (EP) by completing Section 1 of the consent form.

Together with the parent/carer, complete the Dimensions tool by logging on to:

<https://dimensions.covwarkpt.nhs.uk>

### What documents do I need?

Parent/carer(s) leaflet.

Frequently asked questions (FAQs) leaflet.

User guide for the Dimensions tool, available from:

<https://dimensions.covwarkpt.nhs.uk>

Neurodevelopmental Pathway Personal Details and Consent Form.



## Step 2

### Consulting an EP

## Key considerations

Children with complex communication difficulties present in many different ways and it is important to make sure that assessment and intervention is tailored to their needs.

An Educational Psychologist can help you consider the student's needs and how they can best be supported.

## What do I need to do?

Discuss the young person with your Coventry EPS Link EP at your termly planning meeting, considering the information that has been gathered through the Dimensions tool.

If concerns present after your planning meeting, share these with your Link EP at the next available opportunity and agree the best way forward.

If your school does not commission psychological services from Coventry EPS, you should contact the lead psychologist for Early Intervention on 024 7678 8400.

Together with the EP, agree:

1. What the student's priority needs are.
2. Whether the student would be best supported through the 'Early Intervention' pathway or by making a referral directly to the specialist Neurodevelopmental Service.\*

Summarise your discussion on Section 2 of the consent form.

\*The Dimensions tool will identify when a direct referral for a specialist ASD assessment is needed. In cases where the Dimensions tool does not indicate that a specialist assessment is needed, the Early Intervention pathway may provide a more appropriate means of support.

## What documents do I need?

Parent/carer(s) leaflet.

Frequently asked questions (FAQs) leaflet.

User guide for the Dimensions tool, available from:

<https://dimensions.covwarkpt.nhs.uk>

Neurodevelopmental Pathway Personal Details and Consent Form.



### Step 3

Consulting parent/  
carer(s)

### Key considerations

Educational Psychologists and teachers can provide information about what might work for a child. Ultimately, the parent must decide what course of action to take.

In the event that the parent/carer is offered Early Intervention but requests a direct referral to the Neurodevelopmental Service, their preference should be respected.

### What do I need to do?

Discuss with parents the outcome of your consultation with the Educational Psychologist and confirm arrangements for support.

Record this information in Section 3 of the consent form.

Inform the Educational Psychologist of the outcome of this conversation and send the completed consent form to Coventry SEND Support Services via Datalocker

### What documents do I need?

Neurodevelopmental Pathway Personal Details and Consent Form.



# If seeking a specialist ASD Assessment:

## Step 4a

Complete a direct referral to the Neurodevelopmental Service

## Key considerations

The Child and Family Neurodevelopmental Service Referral Form is designed to gather a comprehensive picture of a child's needs across both home and school.

It should be completed by a representative from the school working together with the parent/carer(s).

It is not unusual for children with complex communication needs to present differently at home to in school. This means that the school representative and parent may record different information under the same sections of the form.

The form is available by clicking [here](#)



## What documents do I need?

The Child and Family Neurodevelopmental Service Referral Form

## What do I need to do?

Complete The Child and Family Neurodevelopmental Service Referral Form with the parent.

Ensure the form is countersigned by a member of the school's senior leadership team.

Send the completed form to the Single Point of Entry (SPE) at:

Single Point of Entry  
Paybody Building  
City of Coventry Health Centre  
Stoney Stanton Road  
Coventry  
West Midlands  
CV1 4FS



## If seeking Early Intervention:

### Step 4b

Gather views from parents, carers and young people: carry out observations

### Key considerations

To help prepare a bespoke support plan, a member of the Early Intervention Team will visit the student in school, meet with them to gather their views and observe them in class.

### What do I need to do?

A member of the Early Intervention Team will agree a date to visit to observe the student and provide possible dates for a consultation meeting.

You can support them by making arrangements for their visit.

### What documents do I need?

You may find it helpful to begin to record information on the Early Intervention Record.



## Step 5

### Holding a consultation

## Key considerations

The initial consultation is a collaborative discussion between the parent/carer(s), school staff and a professional from the Early Intervention Team.

## What do I need to do?

Prior to the meeting you should:

- agree a date for the consultation with the Early Intervention professional and parent/carer(s)
- invite a person who knows the student well to the consultation on the agreed date

During the initial consultation, you should expect to:

- share any information that you have gathered about the student's communication skills
- discuss the outcomes of the Dimensions assessment and the priority areas that were agreed with the EP

The Early Intervention professional will:

- share the information gathered through their observation and discussion
- suggest strategies to support the student in school and at home

As a group, working collaboratively, you should:

- agree one or two outcomes to work toward over the coming 6-8 weeks
- agree a suitable programme of intervention
- at the end of the meeting, agree a date to review the student's progress

## What documents do I need?

Neurodevelopmental Pathway Early Intervention Record with any relevant information that you have gathered about the student's strengths and needs.

## Step 6

Implementing the Intervention Plan (this is Section 3 of the Early Intervention Record)

### Key considerations

Supporting the student early on increases the likelihood of success.

The Intervention Plan may include actions for the parent/carer(s) and actions for the school.

The Intervention Plan may include some direct intervention from an Early Intervention professional. This can be delivered at home, in school, or across both settings.

### What do I need to do?

Implement the Intervention Plan, as agreed at the consultation.

### What documents do I need?

A copy of the Early Intervention Record (to be provided by the Early Intervention professional).



## Step 7

Reviewing progress

### Key considerations

The way in which the student responds to intervention will help inform any further diagnostic assessment (if appropriate).

### What do I need to do?

Meet with the parent/carer(s); key worker and a member of the Early Intervention Team to discuss the student's progress.

### What documents do I need?

A copy of the Early Intervention Record.

## Step 8

### Agreeing next steps

### Key considerations

Completing Early Intervention may have various outcomes:

- Some students may learn new skills or coping mechanisms which address the concerns that were initially raised
- There may be greater clarity about a student's needs and how best to support him or her
- Early Intervention may highlight the need for a specialist ASD assessment

### What do I need to do?

During the meeting, you should either:

- agree how else to support the student (e.g. through monitoring and review in school)

OR:

- refer the student to another support service

OR:

- ask the Early Intervention professional to forward the information you have gathered to the Neurodevelopmental Service for a specialist ASD Assessment (no additional referral form is required).

### What documents do I need?

A copy of the Early Intervention Record.



If you need this information in another format or language please contact James Gillum on 024 7678 8400 or e-mail: [james.gillum@coventry.gov.uk](mailto:james.gillum@coventry.gov.uk)