

Introduction of Consultation Clinics to ASD assessment pathway in NPT

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What we did



- We introduced a, 'Consultation Clinic' which allowed referrers to meet with two members of the Autism Spectrum Disorders MDT to discuss possible referrals.
- In Neath Port Talbot locality, referrals for diagnostic assessment of Autism Spectrum Disorder, (ASD) for school aged children are made by school staff on a pathway developed jointly by Health and Education.
- Referrals are discussed monthly by a multidisciplinary team, (MDT) comprising a Consultant Psychiatrist, Speech and Language Therapist and Advisory Teacher. This meeting ensures a safe and equitable person centred approach; referrals are accepted based on the quality of evidence provided, (NICE, 2011).

Why we did it



- In 2016, 88 referrals were discussed and 47 accepted (53%). A more efficient, effective and timely process was needed.
- Feedback from school staff showed they wanted support to improve the quality of referral evidence; this could reduce the number of inappropriate, declined referrals and create more timely access to services for families.

How we did it



- A pilot consultation clinic with schools was agreed; each week, two members of the MDT met with school staff to discuss possible referrals.
- This time replaced a *specialist* clinic appointment for 1 patient, with a *targeted* session to discuss 6-8 pupils. This service delivery model reflects the Together for Children and Young People programme (T4CYP, 2015); a Welsh Government initiative to improve the emotional and mental health of children and young people in Wales.

What were the outcomes?



- The quantitative measure of improvement showed the most positive change; the number of referrals accepted increased from 53% in 2016 to 94% in 2017.
- The qualitative measure from self reported knowledge of school staff using questionnaires before and after the consultation, showed mixed results. Half of respondents had appropriate knowledge before the clinic and this did not change. The other half had less knowledge beforehand and this did not measurably change.