

How to seek an autism diagnostic assessment

Seeking an autism diagnostic assessment may seem like a confusing process. This advice sheet includes information about things to consider when seeking an autism diagnostic assessment in **Wales**.

Why you are seeking an assessment

Before seeking an autism diagnostic assessment it may be worth thinking about why you feel that you would like an assessment and the expectations that you have from the process. This will help you decide if seeking a diagnosis is the right thing for you.

Here are some examples of some benefits of seeking an assessment as well as some difficulties that may arise from seeking an assessment.

Possible benefits

- Can help in learning more about yourself
- Can provide validation
- Can help in processing your differences
- Can help in gaining access to support after the assessment

Possible difficulties

- The process itself may be uncomfortable and bring up thoughts and feelings from your past which are painful
- You may blame yourself for past things going wrong
- You may grieve the life you could have had if you had sought a diagnosis sooner
- A diagnosis may mean you experience social stigma – many people do not understand Autism
- Not receiving a diagnosis may mean that you feel lost and not know where to go

You may want to add and think about some benefits and difficulties that may be relevant to you.

What to do once you have decided to seek an assessment

Once you have decided that you would like to seek an autism diagnostic assessment here are the steps that you can take in Wales.

If you have a worker supporting you in an adult mental health service or learning disability services that service will undertake an autism diagnostic assessment. You should therefore contact the service that is working with you to discuss an autism assessment.

For other adults seeking an autism assessment in Wales you can **self-refer** to one of the seven Integrated Autism Services (IAS) in Wales. This means that you can directly contact the IAS in your area by either phone or email.

The Integrated Autism Services in Wales provide autism diagnostic assessments for adults, short term support for autistic adults and support for professionals working with autistic adults.

Click [here](#) for a document showing the location of each IAS in Wales and the counties that they cover.

Here is a link to contact information for the IASs in Wales
<https://autismwales.org/en/integrated-autism-service/>.

It is important to note that there are waiting lists in each individual IAS. The services will let you know how long you can expect to wait until you are assessed. In addition, some IAS may use a private provider for your assessment. If this is the case they will discuss this with you.

Self-referral to the IASs

After contacting the IAS or your GP you will be given a form to fill in so that you can refer yourself to the service. This form asks questions that are based on the diagnostic criteria for autism. The form helps the service to evaluate the appropriateness of your referral and can help with the diagnostic process. If there is not enough information on the form for the service to accept the referral they may ask you for further information.

The IAS forms may be slightly different from one another but are based on the same criteria. [Click here](#) for information on the [referral form questions](#) asked.

Experiences of the referral process

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While waiting for the assessment, my mum and I both did our own research around autism, cause it hadn't been mentioned to us ever before. I had heard the word before but didn't know anything about what it was like to have it. I was a young teenager at the time, but the more I read about autism in children and young people the more I felt like it sounded like me and that a lot of the challenges and barriers faced by other autistic people were really similar to mine. I think after my mum and I were as certain as we could be that I was autistic, I then had to wait (impatiently) for the assessment.

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My experience of filling in the referral form was difficult. Questions and my understanding of them have changed with knowledge and time.

I found it extremely difficult having to ask my mum to go through the form with me.

