

# Social Communication Team: Diagnostic Assessment

## Information for Parents and Children

This factsheet gives a general overview of Diagnostic Assessment by the Western Isles Social Communication Team offering information and advice to parents and children.

### **Why is my child being seen by the Social Communication Team (SCT)?**

The Social Communication Team see children where there is a possibility of an Autism Spectrum Disorder. This means they usually have:

- Social difficulties
- Difficulties with Language and communication; and
- Difficulties with their behaviour and using their imagination.

### **How will my child be assessed?**

Questionnaires will be sent out to you and your child's school, although this step may not be necessary if your child is very young. We may meet you to discuss your concerns and find out about your child from your point of view. If there is enough evidence of an Autism Spectrum Disorder, we will arrange a meeting which will focus on an in depth developmental history of your child and his/her strengths and weaknesses. This may take a couple of hours. Reports may be requested from professionals who know your child. A professional may be a Speech and Language Therapist, Occupational Therapist, Teacher, Paediatrician, Psychologist.

Your child will also have an assessment with members of the Team, which may take one or more sessions. A typical assessment session will last between 1 – 2 hours. In the majority of cases this assessment will take place at Action for Children, on Bayhead in Stornoway. Most pre-school children will require a parent to remain with them during the assessment but older children will usually manage on their own. We offer a snack during the assessment and invite you to bring along a drink and food your child will enjoy.

### **What happens at the assessment?**

Assessments will involve play and conversation appropriate to your child's age and ability. At least two members of our team will be present and sometimes we may ask for your consent to video tape. We will look at communication, social interaction and flexibility of thinking, which are core areas of difficulty in Autism Spectrum Disorders.

The team is involved in assessment and clinical diagnosis. They do not carry out investigations such as blood and urine tests, scans etc. In the majority of cases these tests are not required but will be done by local services where indicated.

## **What happens after the assessment?**

After the assessment, members of the Team will arrange to meet you to discuss their findings. Parents will have the opportunity to ask questions and discuss implications.

The Team will prepare a report summarising their observations and conclusions. The report will be sent to parents and with your agreement, will also be sent to professionals working with the child.

Parents and professionals are invited to contact the Team to discuss any aspects of the report, if required.

If a diagnosis is given, you and your child, if appropriate, will be provided with an information pack, and the opportunity to discuss available support.

## **Contact Details:**

Any questions or comments may be addressed to:

The Assessment Team: 01851 708283

Catherine Byrne  
Speech & Language Therapist  
Western Isles Hospital  
Macaulay Road  
Stornoway  
Tel: 01851 708280

Orla Urquhart  
Occupational Therapist  
Springfield Road Practice  
Springfield Road  
Stornoway  
01851 705685

Dr Shannon Finlayson  
Psychologist  
Education Dept.  
Comhairle nan Eilean Siar  
Sandwick Road  
Stornoway  
01851 822736

## **Further Links:**

Western Isles Hospital  
Macaulay Road  
Stornoway  
Isle of Lewis HS1 2AF  
Tel: 01851 704704

Uists & Barra Hospital  
Balivanich  
Isle of Benbecula  
HS7 5LA  
Tel: 01870 603603

St Brendan's Hospital  
Castlebay  
Isle of Barra  
HS9 5XD  
Tel: 01871 810465