

Dr. Hunt Psychology Ltd



Neurodevelopmental Assessments (ASD / ADHD / cognitive ability (IQ))

At Dr. Hunt Psychology, we conduct multidisciplinary assessments for Autism spectrum disorder (ASD), Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and Intellectual Disability in accordance with best-practice guidelines. Sometimes enquiries arise about the acceptance of private diagnoses by educational institutions and other local authority services. There is no legal foundation for discrediting a private diagnosis, if the assessment has been carried out by suitably qualified and proficient experts and adheres to the process set out by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE).

Our clinicians are all trained and experienced in assessing children for neurodevelopmental conditions. We do not provide speech and language or sensory processing assessments in our service. These assessments are not required to complete an autism assessment, but we would signpost families to these assessments if we felt that this was required.

The ASD and ADHD Assessment Process

The assessment process starts with an initial a screening process, whereby we typically request parents/carers and the school to complete electronic screening forms. These forms encompass a school observation / parent observation component, alongside the Social Responsiveness Scales - 2nd Edition (ASD screener)) and the Conners 4th Edition (ADHD screener). Your key clinician (a Clinical Psychologist) will review the screening information and advise you on what would be the most suitable assessment pathway for your child (e.g. ASD assessment, ADHD assessment, Combined ASD and ADHD assessment, cognitive assessment, further information required or assessment not recommended).

The second part of the assessment is an initial assessment appointment whereby a Developmental History is taken via MS Teams and should last for 2-3 hours. This is an interview-based evaluation used to compile an extensive developmental history, spanning from birth to present. At least one parent must be present for this appointment. The child is also requested to be present for at the first 15 minutes of the appointment for all assessments. If the child is secondary school aged and is being assessed for ADHD, then it would be helpful for them to attend for the first 60-90 minutes of the appointment. If this is not possible (for practical or other reasons) then do let us know beforehand and we can figure out a plan. Depending on the child's age and presentation, they will usually not be required to remain present for the whole interview and you can discuss this with your key clinician prior to or at the beginning of your appointment. At the end of the appointment, your key clinician will advise you whether or not they feel it would be appropriate to proceed to the next stage of the assessment. The initial assessment appointment will be carried out by one of our Clinical Psychologists.

The third part of the assessment is the face-to-face assessment at our clinic location in Hertford. This part of the assessment must be attended by the child and they will usually be assessed using the Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule - 2nd UK Edition (ADOS-II) if they are being assessed for ASD.

The ADOS-II is an interactive and observational assessment involving joint participation of the child and the assessor in various activities. Different versions of the ADOS-II are used dependent on the child's age and language level. The assessment usually takes around one hour to complete. The ADOS-II is conducted by a fully trained clinician. Currently, our

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ADOS-II clinicians include Abigail Mance (Principal Speech and Language Therapist), Richard Martin (Specialist Speech and Language Therapist), Alice Carter (Highly Specialist Speech and Language Therapist) and Claire Ambler (Highly Specialist Speech and Language Therapist), Emma Palluotto (Clinical Psychologist) and Lauren Daniels (Clinical Psychologist). The ADOS-II clinician who you see is dependent upon the child's profile and our clinician availability. Parents do not usually attend this session unless the child is below the age of 4. We ask parents to wait in the waiting area outside of the clinic room whilst their child is being assessed.

If your child is being assessed for ADHD, then they will usually be assessed using the QB-Check. This is a computer based task of attention, hyperactivity and impulsivity. This assessment takes 15-20 minutes. Depending on the age and presentation of the child, the clinician may ask the child some additional questions about their experiences in relation to attention, hyperactivity and/or impulsivity. This may take up to 30 minutes. If your child is being assessed for both ASD and ADHD, we will try to arrange for both the ADOS-II and the QB Check to take place within the same appointment and with the same clinician, though we cannot guarantee this.

Following the assessment(s), we meet as a multidisciplinary panel to discuss the assessment and agree on a diagnostic outcome. A comprehensive report with recommendations is then written. The process between the initial assessment appointment and receiving the report should take 4-8 weeks. The process may take a little longer if a school observation is needed, though this is not part of our standard process and is only recommended in a small minority of cases. You are welcome to request to know the diagnostic outcome of the assessment as soon as possible via email from your lead clinician in advance of receiving the full report, if this is helpful for you.

The Cognitive Assessment Process

Cognitive Assessment can be conducted to ascertain a child's full cognitive functioning profile. We use the Wechsler Intelligence Scales - Fifth UK Edition (for adults or children, depending on age). It yields a Full-Scale IQ score as well as assessing intelligence across five domains (Verbal Comprehension, Perceptual Reasoning, Fluid Reasoning, Working Memory and Processing Speed). The assessment takes around an hour to an hour and a half and a report is also completed.

Cognitive assessments can be useful if you are concerned that your child is not reaching their academic potential or if they are struggling with learning. Sometimes it is not a child's intelligence that impedes their academic progress but other areas of functioning such as working memory. Working memory deficits are common in ADHD and in specific learning difficulties (e.g. dyslexia) and can have a significant impact on a child's academic progress. Processing speed can also have a significant impact on academic progress and on homework and exam performance. We do not assess for specific learning disorders (e.g. dyslexia and dyscalculia) but our assessments may sometimes identify that further assessments in these areas are warranted and if this is the case then we can signpost you to appropriate services.

Sometimes a child may have an Intellectual / Learning Disability and a cognitive assessment is an important part of assessing for this. If we think that your child may be presenting with

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an Intellectual / Learning Disability, then we will complete some additional measures to determine this.

The full cognitive assessment costs £695 and includes a comprehensive report.

Fee Structure

The charge for the initial screening is £195. This determines whether there is enough evidence to justify proceeding to the next stage of the assessment and which pathway would be most appropriate (e.g. ASD assessment, ADHD assessment, combined assessment, enhanced assessment, cognitive assessment or no further assessment indicated).

ASD Assessments

If we agree to continue to a full ASD assessment, then an additional £700 must be paid before booking the initial assessment appointment. This appointment does not result in a diagnosis, but it indicates whether further investigation is recommended. If we agree to proceed to the full autism assessment, then the remaining balance of £1000 must be paid before scheduling the face-to-face assessment appointment. Thus, the total cost of a Standard Autism Assessment is £1895.

ADHD Assessments

If we agree to continue to a full ADHD assessment, then an additional £700 must be paid before booking the initial assessment appointment. This appointment does not result in a diagnosis, but it indicates whether further investigation is recommended. If we agree to proceed to the full ADHD assessment, then the remaining balance of £900 must be paid before scheduling the face-to-face assessment appointment. Thus, the total cost of a Standard ADHD Assessment is £1795.

Combined ASD and ADHD assessments

If we agree to continue to the full ASD and ADHD assessment, then an additional £1100 must be paid before booking the initial assessment appointment. This appointment does not result in a diagnosis, but it indicates whether further investigation is recommended. If we agree to proceed to the full ASD and ADHD assessment, then the remaining balance of £1300 must be paid before scheduling the face-to-face assessment appointment. Thus, the total cost of combined ASD/ADHD Assessment is £2595.

Cognitive assessments

If there are concerns about your child's learning, including concerns about a possible underlying Intellectual or Learning Disability, then you may wish to book a cognitive assessment. A standalone cognitive assessment costs £695. This cost will need to be paid in full before school and home information forms are sent out. Upon the return of the forms, the cognitive assessment appointment will be scheduled. Depending on the cognitive assessment outcome, an additional questionnaire may need to be completed by parents. This is a questionnaire that assesses adaptive functioning, which is an important area to assess if a diagnosis of Intellectual / Learning Disability is being considered.

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If you would like to 'add on' a cognitive assessment to an ASD, ADHD or Combined assessment, then you can do so (with agreement from your lead clinician) for an additional cost of £395.

School observations

In a minority of cases, a conclusive diagnosis cannot be established. Such situations might occur if, for example, a parent reports a robust history of autism but the child's face-to-face assessment and school report are not significantly indicative of autism. In such circumstances, a school observation might be beneficial and this would incur an additional costs of around £300, dependent upon the location of the school and the most suitable clinician. Please note that school observations are not required for most of our autism assessments.

Payment Terms and Guidelines

Payment is permitted through Bank Transfer. Cheques or credit cards are not accepted. Payments must be made at each stage before an appointment is booked.

Cancellation Policy: Any assessments not attended or cancelled with less than 48 hours notice will incur a £200 fee.

Post-Assessment

A comprehensive report incorporating recommendations will be sent, alongside an option to request a feedback appointment with your key clinician. This needs to be requested within four weeks of the report being sent. Upon booking the appointment, a Teams link for the feedback session will be provided. This feedback appointment is included within both the standard and enhanced packages.

If an ASD and/or ADHD diagnosis is given, you should not need this to be endorsed by the NHS. An autism assessment cannot be legally dismissed, just because it has been made privately. We also know that sometimes things can go wrong in 'the system'. If you have any difficulties with having the report accepted by local authority services, then please let us know and we will do our best to support you with this. Occasionally families have asked their local NHS autism or ADHD assessment service to 'verify' the private assessment report if there have been problems with it being accepted.

It is important to note that an autism and/or ADHD diagnosis does not automatically warrant an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). This process is distinct and eligibility is dependent on individual circumstances. There are organisations and services that can help with this side of things, which we can signpost you to.

The report provided will include recommendations for schools, parents and the person being assessed (where appropriate).

Post diagnostic support

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We are able to offer additional sessions of post-diagnostic support if required and these cost £200 per appointment. These appointments last for up to one hour and are conducted remotely via MS Teams. We will also signpost you to local free and low cost post diagnostic support following the assessment.

