

**Specialist Assessment Service**

**Pathological Demand Avoidance (PDA)**

**Referral pack**

PDA is becoming increasingly recognised as an atypical subtype of an Autism Spectrum Disorder. It is important to recognise that PDA is not formally recognised as a clinical diagnostic term. From our experience we have become aware that there are some children whose profile of needs change over time and people then become concerned that their profile of needs indicate a PDA. However, it is often that case that there are alternative explanations for such a change, which could include:

* Emerging emotional/mental health difficulties
* Increasing anxiety as a result of demand in the environment increasing, for example, changes in the environment, events that result in stress for anyone in the environment
* Strategies that have been recommended not having been implemented
* Alternative additional difficulties that the child/young person has that were not identified at the point of the previous assessment

It is recognised that the advantages of recognising PDA is specifically because the educational handling strategies are different from young people with a PDA in comparison to young people with an ASD.

Therefore the assessment pathway that has been designed for assessing for PDA has tried to ensure that all of these key issues are addressed in the process of assessment. This is a model of **‘assessment over time’** in the environments (home and school) in which the child/young person is in. This model ensures that there is on-going monitoring of needs, implementation of support and strategies and monitoring of outcomes. Once all information is received, if the referral is accepted, there will be **consultation process** involving family, SISS and key professionals from education and any other professionals supporting the child and family to consider the evidence that has been gathered and determine if the child would benefit from a diagnosis of PDA. If this is case it is hoped that further direct assessment with the child will be unnecessary.

It has been agreed that from September 2017 that referrals for PDA will be considered by the Specialist Assessment Service. Included in this pack are copies of the paperwork that you will be required to provide at the point of referral to the Specialist Assessment Service. If you wish to discuss any of this further please feel free to contact Dr Lisa Summerhill: 0121 722 8010. Alternatively you can contact Tina Partridge: 0121 704 6690.