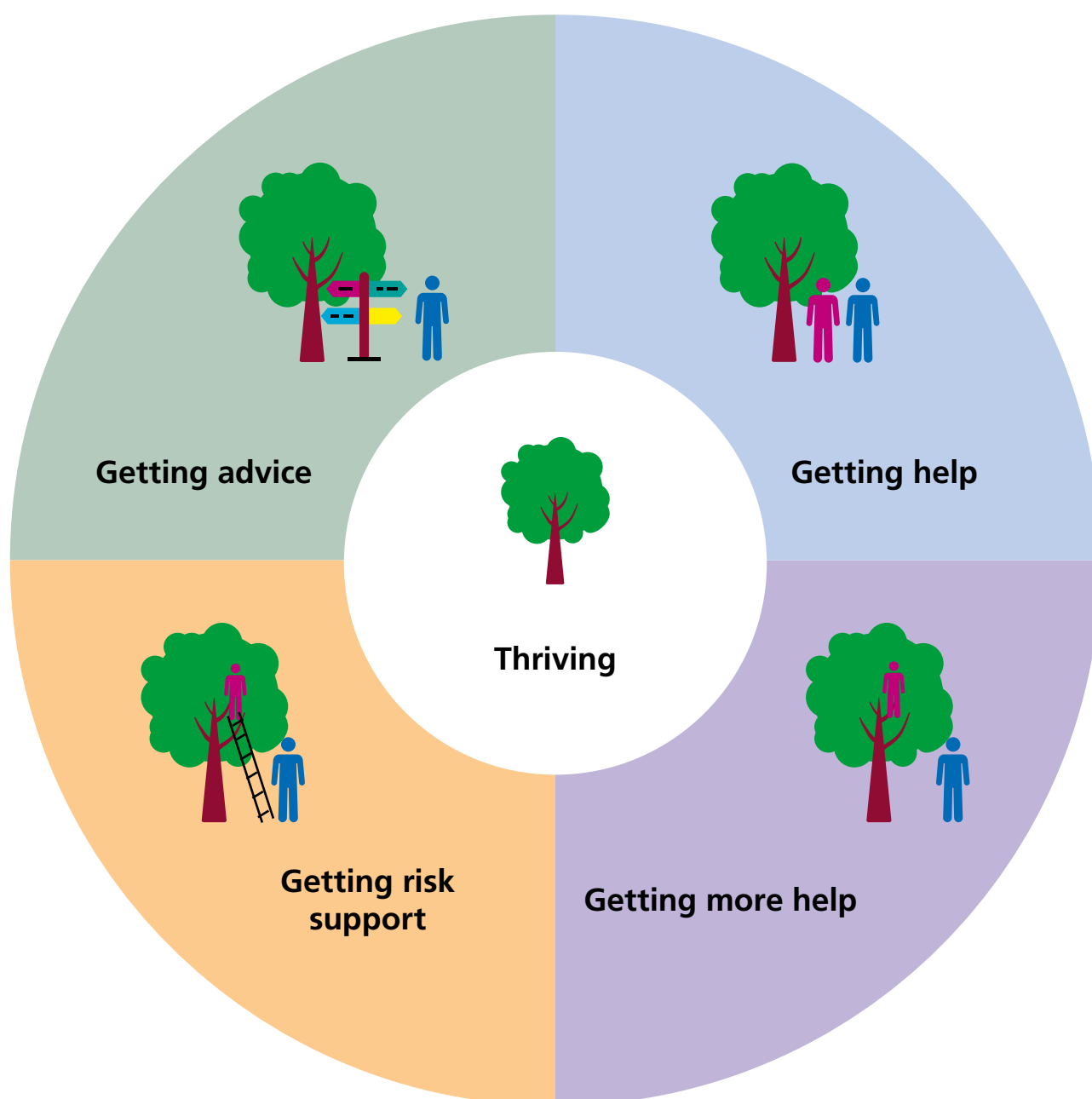
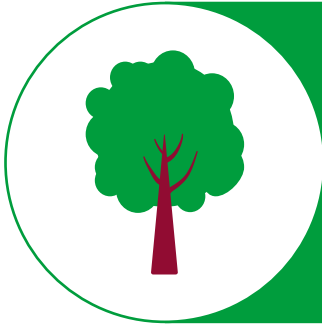


Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service family guidance: Help with understanding neurodiversity



For more information, visit cornwallft.nhs.uk/camhs



In Cornwall, we include nature to support different therapies. Let your practitioner know if this is something you might like.

What do we mean by help with neurodiversity?

Different brains

Neurodiversity means everyone's brain works differently. It's about recognising and valuing these differences, not seeing them as problems.

Neurodivergent

This term describes people whose brains work in ways that are different from what's considered typical. This can bring strengths, but also challenges.

If environments and routines are not designed for them, they might face stress or feel left out. This can increase the risk of mental health difficulties.

Cornwall's approach

In Cornwall, the goal is to move away from just giving labels (diagnoses) and focus on what people actually need. This includes helping everyone who needs support, even if they do not have a formal diagnosis.

9 areas to consider

To understand someone's neurodevelopmental profile, we look at these 9 areas:

1. Speech and language.
2. Energy levels.
3. Attention and impulse control.
4. Emotional regulation.
5. Motor skills.
6. Sensory processing (such as how they experience sights or sounds).
7. Flexibility and adaptability.
8. Systemising and empathising.
9. Thinking skills (cognitive ability).

Helping young people

In Cornwall, we want to help every child and young person understand their strengths and needs.

Early support

If we make adjustments early on, we can prevent stress and exclusion, which can lead to problems at school and mental health issues like anxiety and low self-esteem.

Specialist assessments

Some children might need a more detailed assessment to understand if they have ADHD, a learning disability or autism.

ADHD

This makes it hard to concentrate, control impulses, and can cause restlessness.

Learning disability

This means someone has difficulty learning or understanding things, or doing tasks, because of how their brain works, but they are still able to learn and achieve. People with learning disabilities may need extra support.

Autism

Autistic people may find it hard to:

- communicate and interact with others
- understand how others feel
- handle sensory overload (bright lights, loud noises)
- cope with changes in routine
- take longer to process information
- find comfort in doing the same things





Getting advice

For children and young people who want to understand how their brains work (their neurodevelopmental profile) and learn about their strengths and what support they need. You can use a tool to understand their profile, find resources online, and join support groups.

Neurodiversity Hub

This Neurodiversity Hub has information and resources for children and families. parentcarerscornwall.org.uk/neurodiversity

It includes a tool to help understand strengths and needs, which can be used by families and professionals. This tool helps create plans for adjustments at home, school, and in social situations.

Support for autistic children

Dreadnought Aspires provides a safe place for autistic children and young people to improve social skills, confidence, and independence. thedreadnought.co.uk/aspires-autism

Online resources

For information and activities, check these websites:

- ADHD Foundation: adhdfoundation.org.uk
- National Autistic Society: autism.org.uk
- ADDISS: addiss.co.uk
- ADDitude: additudemag.com

Healthy living

Diet, exercise, and good sleep are important for managing stress and wellbeing. This includes:

- getting sunlight
- spending time with loved ones
- being outdoors
- eating healthy
- being active
- getting enough sleep

Resources

- Active Cornwall helps people be more physically active. activecornwall.org
- Healthy Cornwall offers advice on physical and mental health, including healthy eating. healthycornwall.org.uk
- Hunrosa's Sleep Service helps with sleep problems. hunrosa.co.uk
- HeadStart Kernow provides local support for parents. headstartkernow.org.uk
- Support in Cornwall has information on free workshops for parents and carers. supportincornwall.org.uk

Professional advice

Bloom meetings

These meetings bring together professionals from different services, including child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS).

With the help of a professional chosen by the family, they discuss a child's unique situation and create a plan for support.

You can be referred to Bloom through the Early Help Hub.

CAMHS

This team of mental health specialists can give advice to families and professionals who refer to CAMHS. They gather information about a child's needs and help families find the right support.

They can provide assessments and help families decide what support is best for them. They work with other children's services to help families access both social and emotional support.

Early Help Hub

This is the main point of contact for early help services. They review requests for help and connect families with organisations that can provide support. You can find out more at:

cornwall.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/childrens-services/early-help

Everyone is different!

We'll change how we help you based on what you find most helpful. We want to make sure the support we give you really works for you.





Getting help

If a young person or their family needs to learn about neurodiversity to get the right help or changes to make things easier, especially if they are worried about how it affects their development or if they feel their needs are not being met, they can get help.

Everyday help for children in Cornwall

General support

A wide range of services, including those from health organisations, the local authority (council), and charities, offer help to children in Cornwall.

Schools can provide specialist advice around understanding special educational needs (SEN) and can offer assessments, recommendations and personalised support and adaptations to all children to ensure they can do well in school.

Understanding strengths and needs

There's a special tool (the neurodiversity profiling tool) that all professionals in Cornwall can use to map a person's strengths or needs and use it to make adjustments and recommendations. This tool helps make plans to support children at home, school, and in their community.

Completion of the profiling tool can be done jointly with a trained professional alongside the child or young person. Usually these are people who work with children, such as health visitors, school nurses, teachers, family workers or healthcare professionals.

This tool can be found at parentcarerscornwall.org.uk/neurodiversity

CAMHS

For mental health problems

If a child who might be neurodivergent is having problems with their mental health and is seeing a CAMHS team.

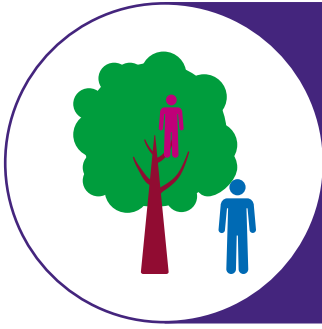
A CAMHS worker will use the neurodiversity profiling tool to make a plan to help the child. CAMHS might suggest more tests for ADHD, autism, or learning disabilities. They might talk to other experts, like speech therapists or doctors.

CAMHS will help make plans that focus on what the child needs and might give advice to other people helping the child.

CAMHS will help parents to understand how best to help their child.

Tests and diagnoses

Most children will get the help they need after using the neurodiversity profiling tool, without needing a formal diagnosis. But sometimes, a full diagnosis is recommended.



Getting more help

Sometimes, children or young people might need a more detailed assessment to find out if they have a specific condition.

When a diagnostic assessment might be needed

A more detailed assessment (diagnostic assessment) might be considered for young people when:

- they've completed the neurodiversity profiling tool
- they've tried making changes to help (reasonable adaptations) for 12 weeks
- there's a serious risk they might develop complex mental health problems and need urgent support

Where assessments happen

Neurodevelopmental Assessment Team

This team assesses children with complex or mixed difficulties. They assess for autism, ADHD, language or coordination problems, and whether other things like learning or life experiences are causing the difficulties.

Find out more: cornwallft.nhs.uk/neurodevelopmental-assessment-team

CAMHS

- **ADHD:** The Neurodevelopmental Assessment Team can diagnose ADHD, provide medication, and give advice. Sometimes, they might recommend short-term CBT (talking therapy).
- **Autism:** The Neurodevelopmental Assessment Team usually diagnoses autism. CAMHS might assess for autism when there's a high risk to the young person or others, or when they have mental health problems as well as possible neurodivergence.
- **Learning disability:** CAMHS can assess for learning disability if a child with mental health problems also has a possible learning disability.
- **Complex assessment:** CAMHS can do a range of detailed assessments to understand complex mental health difficulties.

Important information

A diagnosis is not needed to get special help from CAMHS or schools.

Having a diagnostic assessment is a choice. Professionals will always discuss the benefits and drawbacks with families and young people before making a decision.



Getting risk support

Sometimes young people and families need help from services but for many different reasons they may be unable to use the help available, or cannot benefit from help. This is when all services work together with a family to try to make plans for safety, help and support

When young people need urgent help

Sometimes, young people reach a point where they're in serious danger.

This might involve:

- severe self-harm
- thinking about or planning suicide
- not taking care of themselves properly
- being a danger to others

This can happen because:

- they have too many problems in their lives
- they find it hard to trust or work with people who are trying to help
- they do not feel safe
- this makes it very hard for them to get the help they need, even if they're trying

What happens in a crisis

When getting normal help is not enough, all the services that know the young person and their family will work together to make a safety plan.

A senior worker will be the main person to coordinate this plan. The plan will focus on keeping the young person safe.

This might involve:

- looking after their physical health
- finding them a safe place to stay
- using medication to help with their symptoms

The Multi Agency Rapid Response Team, which includes mental health nurses, social workers and specialist practitioners, helps to support young people and families in need of immediate emergency support.

Where to find helpful information

- Easy read toolkit for people with learning difficulties:
shininglightsonsuicide.org.uk/stay-safe-toolkit-for-people-with-learning-disabilities
- Autistica autism informed suicide information and advice:
autistica.org.uk/what-is-autism/signs-and-symptoms/suicide-and-autism

The Kernow and Isles of Scilly Keyworking Service (KIOSK) helps young people with autism and/or learning disabilities who are at risk of being admitted to a mental health hospital.

cornwallft.nhs.uk/kiosk

Young people sometimes need to stay at Sowenna inpatient unit at Bodmin Community Hospital, where they can get safe care, education, and therapy.



Crisis support

Sometimes your difficulties and needs may increase, and you may need specialist support from our Multi Agency Rapid Response Service.

Sometimes concerns can feel overwhelming. You can seek support from your Core CAMHS Team using the number for the duty clinician, Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm. Find this number in your safety plan.

Out of working hours crisis support

24/7 mental health response line

Link to Multi Agency Rapid Response Service if needed.
Call **NHS 111**, select option 2.

Child Line

Free counselling for children and young people up to the age of 19
Call **0800 11 11**
Visit [childline.org.uk](https://www.childline.org.uk)

Multi-Agency Referral Unit

For immediate concerns, or if you are worried about a child or young person's safety
Call **0300 123 1116**

Papyrus Hope Line UK

For confidential support and practical advice if you are having thoughts of suicide or are concerned for a young person who might be get in touch
Call **0800 068 4141**
Text **07860 039 967**
Email: pat@papyrus-uk.org
Visit [papyrus-uk.org](https://www.papyrus-uk.org)

Samaritans

Call free on **116 123**
Email jo@samaritans.org for a reply within 24 hours
Visit [samaritans.org](https://www.samaritans.org)

Shout

Confidential, 24/7, free (from all major UK mobile networks) text messaging support service for anyone who is struggling to cope
Text: SHOUT to **85258**
Visit [giveusashout.org](https://www.giveusashout.org)