



Autism NI (PAPA) Position Statement

Diagnosis

“Diagnosis is not a Label..... It is a Signpost”
Richard Exley

Autism NI (PAPA) recognises that the decision to access a diagnosis is a matter of individual choice within families. There should be clear referral pathways and these should be made known to all General Practitioners/Primary Care Teams in Northern Ireland

The diagnostic process should be multi-disciplinary (involving families) and funded/recognised by the relevant Health and Education authority. Assessment must be conducted in a range of settings e.g. at home, at playgroups/school or at work.

Autism NI (PAPA) recommends that a parent/individual with Autism should have their partner or a support person with them during the diagnostic process. If a diagnosis of an Autistic Spectrum Disorder is appropriate then a follow-up appointment should be arranged immediately and the parent/individual with Autism encouraged or supported in compiling a list of queries/questions. A written diagnostic assessment report should be forwarded to the family (and relevant professionals as agreed by the parent) within a specified time frame.

The parent/carer or individual should be given immediate access to written and visual information regarding Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD) and appropriate support networks such as the Autism NI Family Support Network.

Training in the diagnosis of ASD should be made available and accessed by relevant professions.

A diagnostic assessment must be followed rapidly by appropriate intervention. Any intervention strategy must have an eclectic base and be person centred.