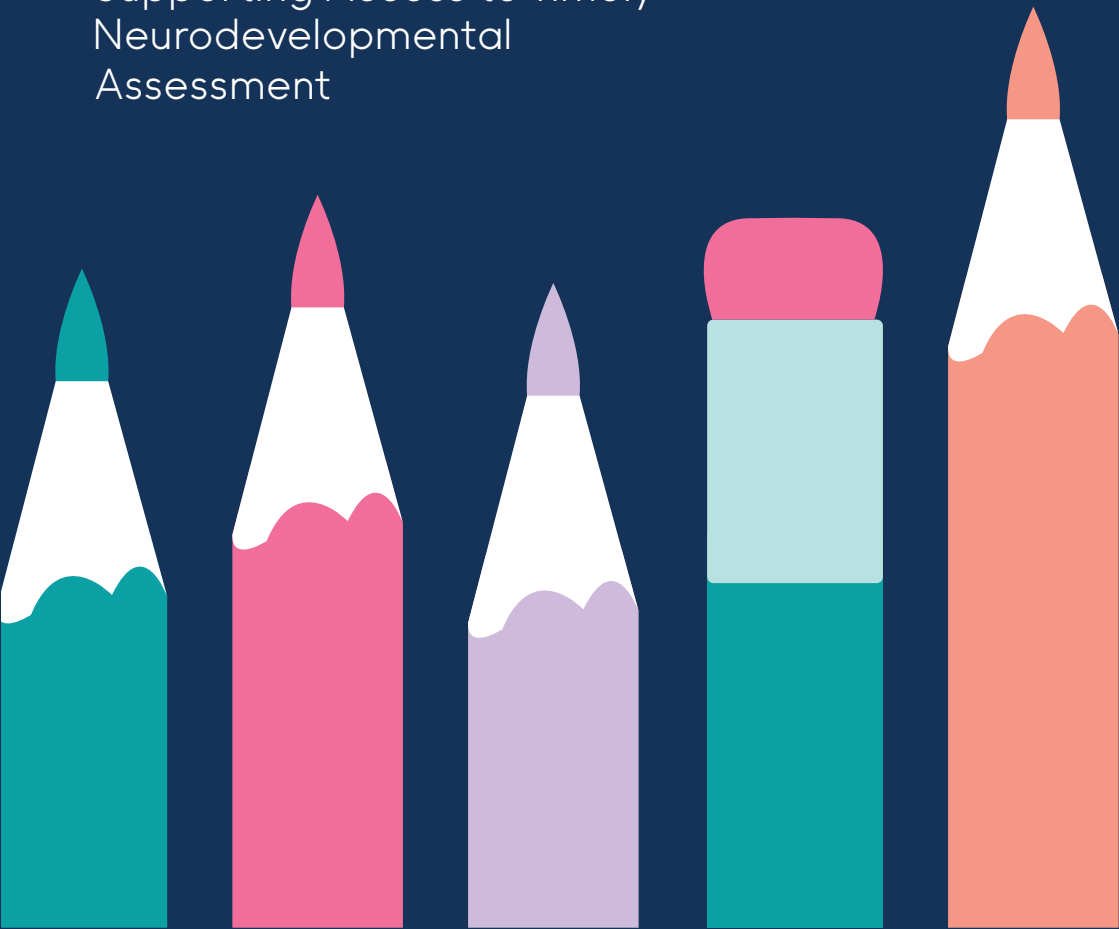


Senco & Referrer Guide

Supporting Access to Timely
Neurodevelopmental
Assessment



A teal pencil is shown in the top left corner, pointing towards a large teal maze on the right side of the page. The maze is a circular path with many turns and dead ends. A line starts from the pencil's tip, loops around, and enters the maze.

Introduction

Many families come to schools and professionals with ongoing concerns about a child or young person's learning, behaviour, or wellbeing — often without clear answers. In some cases, waiting for assessment can delay access to the understanding and support they need.

This guide is designed to support SENCOs, schools, and referrers in:

- Recognising when an assessment may be helpful
- Understanding what a high-quality assessment should include
- Supporting families in accessing appropriate next steps



When to Consider Referral for Assessment

You may want to explore referral when:

- A young person is struggling to engage or reach their potential despite support
- There are differences between home and school presentation
- Behaviour is being misunderstood or escalating
- There is uncertainty around needs (e.g. ADHD, autism, or co-occurring difficulties)
- Previous support strategies have had limited impact
- Waiting times are delaying clarity and support

Common Challenges Before Referral

From experience, schools often face:

- Difficulty determining the most appropriate referral pathway
- Balancing school observations vs parent concerns
- Limited access to timely assessment
- Uncertainty around how outcomes will be used in practice
- Supporting young people who are masking in school but struggling elsewhere

What Makes a High-Quality Assessment

Not all assessments are equal.
A meaningful assessment should:

Take a holistic view

- Considers the full history, not just current presentation
- Explores mental health, developmental, and contextual factors
- Recognises that no young person presents with a single, isolated difficulty

Gather information from multiple sources

- Family
- School
- Direct clinical observation
- Standardised tools (where appropriate)

Follow recognised standards

- Aligned with NICE guidelines
- Delivered by appropriately qualified clinicians

Consider differential diagnosis

- Looks beyond one condition
- Identifies overlapping or co-occurring needs
- Ensures conclusions are clinically robust

What Makes a Report Useful in Practice

A report should go beyond diagnosis. For schools, the most useful reports:

- ✓ Clearly explain how needs present in the school environment
- ✓ Provide specific, practical recommendations (not generic advice)
- ✓ Include a coherent profile of strengths and challenges
- ✓ Are structured and easy to interpret
- ✓ Support communication between school, family, and other professionals

What Often Changes After Assessment

When an assessment is done well, outcomes can include:

- Greater clarity and shared understanding
- Improved communication between school and family
- More targeted and appropriate support strategies
- Increased confidence for staff supporting the young person
- A shift from “managing behaviour” to understanding needs

For many families, it also provides:

- Validation
- Direction
- A clearer sense of next steps

Working with Referral Partners

We work alongside schools, SENCOs, and organisations to support families who need access to timely, high-quality assessment.

“The process has been smooth, well-structured and clearly communicated. Families have felt supported throughout, and the impact has been significant — helping them access clarity and next steps much sooner.”

— The Roxi Foundation

Our Approach

Holistic, person-centred assessments

Input from an experienced multidisciplinary team

Focus on understanding, not just diagnosis

Clear, practical recommendations

Ongoing focus on what happens next

Why Oxford CBT?

Why schools work with us:

- Experienced multidisciplinary team of clinical psychologists, paediatricians and psychiatrists
- NICE-compliant assessments delivered by HCPC-registered clinicians
- Reports written for practical use in school settings, not just clinical record
- Dedicated feedback session included as standard
- Assessment to ongoing support — therapy and coaching available through one service

Services Available

ADHD assessments
(children and adults)

Autism assessments
(children and adults)

Child therapy

ADHD & Autism coaching




Psychological therapies (CBT, EMDR, DBT)

All assessments and treatments follow NICE guidelines and are delivered by experienced clinicians.

Next Steps

Most families seeking assessment are not looking for a label — they are looking for understanding, clarity, and practical support. A well-conducted assessment can be a key step in making that possible.

If you are supporting a family and feel an assessment may be helpful:

-  Consider discussing the options with the family
-  Ensure they understand what the process involves
-  Signpost based on urgency and need

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 [oxfordcbt.co.uk](https://www.oxfordcbt.co.uk)

We are always happy to have an informal conversation — no commitment needed.



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