APD TESTING CENTRES 2020

APD is a medical condition of neurological origin, not a learning difficulty, although it can cause learning difficulties in some people. Therefore, only an appropriate medical specialist, (a consultant in audiology or audio-vestibular medicine, in fact), is qualified to diagnose APD. Diagnosis is essential; it is not just about education and every child is UNIQUELY affected. It isn't simply a question of having it or not. Appropriate and adequate support (at school, at work, for life) depends on accurate diagnosis.

RECOMMENDED FREE/NHS TESTING CENTRES FOR CHILDREN IN ENGLAND

• Great Ormond Street Hospital, London/GOSH for children age 7-16.

N.B. GOSH are now only accepting referrals for children living within the M25 area (Outer and Inner London). Please see my website for their criteria, to make sure that your child meets the criteria before seeking referral. GOSH WILL still test children with high functioning autism, decided on a case by case basis.

http://www.gosh.nhs.uk/medical-information/auditory-processing-disorder


• The Nuffield Hearing and Speech Centre multidisciplinary APD service for children age 8 and over. Dr Chrysa Spyridakou and Prof Doris Bamiou are the consultants there. Please see my website for their criteria, to make sure that your child meets the criteria before seeking referral.

Please note: The Nuffield Hearing and Speech Centre WILL still test children with high functioning autism, decided on a case by case basis. Your GP has to book via their online booking system but they will accept a paper referral/ letter from audiologists or paediatricians.

Here are the NEW address and contact details:

Royal National ENT and Eastman Dental Hospitals

47-49 Huntley Street
London
WC1E 6DG
Patient enquiries
Telephone: 020 3456 5655 (Minicom - 020 3456 5318)

General enquiries
Telephone: 020 3456 5655
Fax: 020 3456 5366
Email: Paediatric.audiology@uclh.nhs.uk

Service manager - Amanda Todd
Email: amanda.todd2@nhs.net

Despite the address being ENT, APD referrals MUST be made to the department of paediatric audvestibular medicine (not the general ENT clinic or paediatric audiology - this will cause delays) and accompanied by copies of any assessment reports that you have had (SALT, EP etc) and the recent hearing test results. GPs should use the online booking system only; other professionals can send a paper referral. The referral should include as much information as possible about the child and the suspected APD. The only time their managers/administrators will ask for Ed Psych reports are when the child has had such an assessment and the report is not attached - otherwise they are not required.

https://www.uclh.nhs.uk/OurServices/ServiceA-Z/ENTS/NUFF/Pages/APD.aspx

• UCLH: London Hearing and Balance Centre. For children (please check with them for age) headed by Prof Doris-Eva Bamiou.

Address: 70 Grafton Way, Kings Cross, London W1T 5DT
Tel: 0203 740 5555.
Fax: 0203 740 5556.
Email: a.furajtarova@lhabc.co.uk (Adriana Furajtarova)

NHS TESTING FOR ADULTS

NHS testing for adults: referrals should be here:

Royal National ENT and Eastman Hospitals
Address:
47-49 Huntley Street
London
WC1E 6DG
Telephone: 020 3456 7890
RECOMMENDED NHS TESTING CENTRES IN WALES - CHILDREN AND ADULTS

The Hearing Institute based at UHW Cardiff - for children age 7 plus. (*They also test children 16 plus and adults). The consultant is Dr Rajenderkumar. With just one clinic a month, there is a long wait for a standard hearing test then another wait for testing. Please note: This centre will not test children with autism, and they only see NHS patients living in Wales.

Welsh Hearing Institute (Audiology) University Hospital of Wales Heath Park CARDIFF CF14 4XW. Tel: 029 2074 3474 / 07807 457952 Email: audmed@hotmail.co.uk http://www.cardiffandvaleuhb.wales.nhs.uk/audiology

RECOMMENDED PRIVATE TESTING CENTRES IN ENGLAND

Southampton University has a private, 2-tier, multi-discipline children’s service. Level 1 merely includes screening, assessments to see if APD is likely, Level 2 provides the testing to confirm it. The team is headed by Dr Nicci Campbell who is the current Chair of BSA APD Interest Group. She is a key author of BSA APD guidelines and its position statement. They also offer dyslexia screening at Level 1. * Both Level 1 and Level 2 testing are recommended unless decided by the consultant. http://ais.southampton.ac.uk/auditory-processing-disorder/

N.B. Due to increased demand, Southampton University is now only taking referrals from those living in Hampshire, Wiltshire, Dorset, West Sussex and isle of Wight.

• The Portland Clinic in London have 2 new consultants for APD private diagnosis- Dr Chrysa Spyridakou and Dr Anu Shetye and have started accepting private APD referrals again.

• London Hearing and Balance Clinic

For private testing for children and adults, referrals should be made to Prof Doris Bamiou here:

Address: 70 Grafton Way, Kings Cross, London W1T 5DT

Tel: 0203 740 5555.
Fax: 0203 740 5556.
Email: a.furajtarova@lhabc.co.uk (Adriana Furajtarova)
Parents can call up and book private appointments. A hearing test will need to be done within 3 months of referral and the child will have to have normal hearing / no glue ear or negative middle ear pressure on the day of the testing (so glue ear will need to be dealt with first). They will take children from 6 to 16, but younger children may have to be tested over 2 days to ensure they are able to maintain their attention (at no extra cost) and so that they won't get too tired (if they are able to manage it in one day, they will do it in one day. Various relevant reports will also be requested depending on your child’s symptoms and any other diagnoses, but they will be requested when you make contact.

TESTING IN SCOTLAND AND N.I

there is currently no full testing service provided. Certain hospitals in Scotland do provide basic screening, which is better than nothing if a referral to one of the centres in England is not possible, however parents in Scotland have successfully obtained referrals to English centres. Private testing in England is also available if this is an option for you.

OUT OF AREA REFERRALS

N.B. If your local GP or ENT department refuse to refer you or your child to a centre out of your area, you should make a complaint to the local Clinical Commissioning Group. Under NHS patient Choice you have the right to be referred to whichever hospital or consultant you choose, especially if there is no comparable testing in your area. There is a legal precedent set as out of area referrals are made all the time. it is just a question of them refusing because they surgery or hospital have to pay for the testing. Another reason is that screening may be available locally but as explained below, this is not recommended unless you have no other option. If your GP or audiologist etc. refuses to refer out of rea, please contact your local Clinical Commissioning Group to complain. https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/Clinical-Commissioning-Group/LocationSearch/1 Under NHS Patient Choice, it is your right to be referred where you choose and the same applies to your child https://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/nhs-services/hospitals/about-nhs-hospital-services/

WHY I RECOMMEND NOT TO GO ANYWHERE NOT LISTED ABOVE

Other places, including NHS hospitals and private organisations and charities, may offer 'testing' which may just be basic screening/assessment and may not lead to a valid diagnosis. It can result in limited and, in some cases, unreliable and incomplete testing and generic recommendations. This is virtually useless when children are affected uniquely and have various other conditions impacting on the APD and vice versa. Children with
(sometimes severe) APD have been missed by some of these assessments, and later diagnosed at GOSH. It is for parents to decide whether locality is preferred over quality of testing and what is important is the expertise of the audiologists involved to accurately interpret the results. Personally, I would not advise that you go anywhere else until standardised testing is available UK-wide, (unless your child does not meet the current criteria). If you are unhappy with this situation, please contact your local health board or Clinical Commissioning Group and MP to request that standardised testing is provided locally. It is your right as a parent or adult with APD to do so.

Please read the criteria for the testing centres where available; they are quite specific and can be found in the files section of my website, along with a lot of APD information and articles for parents, teenagers and adults.

**HOW TO GET A REFERRAL FOR TESTING**

To start with, your child needs a hearing test at around the time the referral is requested - it has to be within 3 months before referral and a referral cannot usually be sent until after the child turns 7 for NHS testing (for the Nuffield it is 8). Hearing loss and glue ear must be ruled out first and grommets should not be in place. It is difficult to test for APD with hearing loss and usually cannot be done during an NHS appointment due to time constraints. Glue ear needs to be treated before testing can take place; they would not, and should not, test a child with glue ear because results are skewed by the intermittent hearing loss that accompanies glue ear.

If the hearing test shows no hearing loss and glue ear, then you can request a referral. To meet the usual criteria, you will FIRST need a report from a relevant professional stating that APD is suspected - please contact the centre you want to be referred to, for their criteria if not listed on my website. Any other suspected conditions and speech and language issues MUST be diagnosed before referral; they won't test a child with hearing loss, glue ear, severe autism, Downs Syndrome, ADHD not receiving treatment or SLI/specific language impairment, all of which can lead to child being unable to respond appropriately to testing.

**PLEASE NOTE:** Please contact the testing centres yourself to check concerning excluded co-existing conditions before getting a referral sent. Please don't have a referral sent in the hope that it will be added to the waiting list: if it is rejected and you will have wasted valuable time.

A hearing test is also advised before seeking referral as an adult.
Request a referral from your GP, paediatrician or audiologist, asking them to send all reports, and send all the information they can about the child’s difficulties (it would help if you can provide them with a list of your observations and the school’s). I would also read and take along the "What is APD" sheet from my website. You will also find most of your questions answered by the document "APD and its implications."

*None of the testing centres will consider a referral without professional suspicion of APD and all appropriate reports being sent with it. If in doubt, contact the centre of your choice direct.

**WHAT FULL APD TESTING SHOULD INCLUDE**

I have been advised that there are sadly no national APD testing guidelines at present. Check they don’t just use a SCANC or SCAN3 screening or only Feather Squadron, these are assessment tools and will not provide full APD testing alone or be able to provide a diagnosis alone. There should be more than just one or two APD tests. Most eminent audiologists agree that there should be a full test battery approach but the practice varies from one service to another. Different individual assessments plus tests may be used, but the areas of auditory processing tested should be roughly the same as GOSH, and selected based on the problems that each child has and the presentation, also considering the other issues the child has. Not all children will need all the tests that can be used; it will depend on what type of APD difficulties seem to be causing a problem.

This is what GOSH provides (it can take up to 4 hours in total for your visit). Other testing centres provide a similar, full range of testing which can take 1.5 to 2 hours of testing alone. They may have a consultation appointment and make a further appointment for the testing.

**PLEASE NOTE:** Most of the recommended testing centres will not currently test a child with autism, please contact them to check before referral.

**TYPICAL GOSH TESTING APPOINTMENT** N.B. GOSH are now only accepting referrals for children living within the M25 area (Outer and Inner London).

As an example of the standard of testing and the process that you should expect to receive at any of the recommended testing centres, this is what GOSH provides. The recommended centres will follow a similar process, although testing for each individual child may vary slightly and not every test may be necessary, depending on the child’s presenting difficulties.
• First, they take a detailed and comprehensive history (this part takes at least an hour), looking at problems that the child has, parents’ concerns, teachers’ concerns, speech and language issues, cognitive issues, reading, written work, memory issues, other diagnoses e.g. Autism, ADHD, learning difficulties. Visual problems, current educational environment and support, pre, peri and post-natal problems, developmental milestones, past history of middle ear, neurological and other mendicant problems, ear problems etc. plus family history.

• Then there is an examination of ears, general examination, and an observation of speech quality.

• Tests are selected based on suspicions raised in the above. They should test from this list, as applicable:
  
  • Tests of peripheral auditory function
  
  • Cochlear feedback pathway
  
  • Ability to hear degraded speech
  
  • Ability to hear speech in noise (if needed in quiet)
  
  • Spatial processing
  
  • Binaural resolution
  
  • Temporal processing
  
  • Auditory pattern sequencing

They can request other tests that are relevant e.g. Electrophysiology (ABR, corticals) and MRI, if applicable. The audiologist has to have sufficient knowledge to interpret these, understand the losses or conditions that may affect the outcome of each test, and if there are other issues e.g. Language issues, how that might affect the test results and interpretation. The audiologist also needs to have a very broad understanding of intervention available and find the most suitable to help the child. Testing will be tailored to your child’s needs.
RESULTS

The test results are usually explained in person on the day or as soon as is possible afterwards. Make sure you understand what the results mean, the specialist should take time to explain it and you have a right to be told, in plain English, what the results mean for your child or yourself, plus the diagnosis. A report should be sent to you later with the test findings; make sure you request one or it may just be sent to the person that referred you. Other testing centres mentioned above may vary in their format but should be expected to provide efficient, complete testing, an explanation and a report. I cannot say about the process of those not mentioned above because at present they vary widely and most places provide testing that is just assessments, or one or two tests where more are needed, which is unfortunately not better than nothing and patients should not have to just accept what they can get.

If seeking private testing, I would personally you to specifically ask whether you are paying for full APD testing to the level and standard provided at GOSH; also, if what they provide qualifies as an audiological diagnosis of APD. Get it in writing before you pay. You should also be provided with a full explanation, diagnosis and report after testing.

N.B. It is up to parents to make sure that they get what they think they are paying for or being referred for, whenever they seek APD testing and diagnosis for their child, either privately or otherwise. You are within your rights to complain (and ask for a refund, if private) if you feel that you have been misled. You can also make a complaint to them, report them to the GMC, or here. Check that they are on the register here: http://www.hcpc-uk.org/check/ (audiologists are apparently listed under Clinical Scientists). If they are on the register, and they acted inappropriately, or were rude/dismissive to you or your child, failed to explain the diagnosis fully or with care, or took money under false pretences, report them and ask for them to be removed from the register.

DIAGNOSIS/REPORT

Check the report when you receive it; it should say whether the child has been given a diagnosis of APD/Auditory Processing Disorder (which means that there is enough evidence of 2 or more separate difficulties of qualifying severity to merit that APD diagnosis). But if it says that there are auditory processing difficulties, that may mean that there is NOT enough evidence of 2 or more separate difficulties of qualifying severity to merit an APD diagnosis or that they cannot say it is APD (*I would ring and ask why). It might just give a diagnosis of Spatial Processing Disorder which is a stand-alone diagnosis of that one specific APD
difficulty. If that was the only difficulty found of qualifying severity, that is not a diagnosis of APD (which needs 2 or more) but Spatial Processing Disorder plus one or more other difficulties of qualifying severity would merit a full APD diagnosis.

(*Other testing centres apart from those mentioned above may not be able to give a diagnosis of APD/Auditory Processing Disorder if they have no consultant to verify the results. The report may then say auditory processing difficulties even if the child has APD, but that might not be the case, so contact them to check). Some places clearly state that what they are giving is not a valid APD diagnosis.

The report should always include the tests used and scores given (if they don't, ask for them). Also, in their report should be clearly-explained, tailored recommendations based on your child's test results, not a generic handout. Be mindful of what the report tells you: it might affect your child's support and/or EHC Plan application/ statement/benefits claims. It needs to be clear and complete. Please contact the consultant if you have any questions or need explanation of the technical terms used in the report. (I would personally recommend that any child with APD struggling at school needs an EHCP).

**CONTACTS**

For any questions on referral, testing and diagnosis.

- Prof Doris-Eva Bamiou, UCLH
- Dr Nicci Campbell in Southampton, Chair BSA Auditory Processing Disorder Special Interest Group/SIG
- Dr Chrysa Spyridakou, Nuffield, UCLH

**SUPPORT AND FURTHER INFORMATION**

On my website [http://apdsupportuk.yolasite.com](http://apdsupportuk.yolasite.com) there are plenty of APD-related articles, handouts and useful hints and tips (for parents and those with APD of all ages), including my APD presentation for you to use, along with accompanying notes and A4 posters, plus APD alert cards with designs for children, teenagers and adults.

There is also a list of all my current APD support groups for parents, also for teenagers and adults with APD, both UK and international.
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https://apdsupportuk.yolasite.com/
apd.support.uk@aol.co.uk

*This list will be updated as new full APD testing centres become available.