

## Paediatric Neuropsychology at Western Health:

Paediatric Neuropsychology is a specialist service for children with neurodevelopmental difficulties and medical conditions that affect brain function. The service provides comprehensive neuropsychological assessment including evaluation of:

- cognitive abilities
- academic skills
- attention
- behaviour
- social and communication skills
- emotional functioning

Assessments are conducted through a combination of interview, observation and psychological testing, and may assist with:

**1. Differential diagnosis**, for example:

- Diagnosis of neurodevelopmental disorders such as Intellectual Disability, Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder, Autism Spectrum Disorder, and Specific Learning Disorder;
- Assisting with differential diagnosis where the impact of a medical condition is complicating the child's presentation;
- Differentiating neurodevelopmental disorders from the impact of other factors such as trauma and mood.

**2. Treatment and intervention planning**, for example:

- Characterising the impact of a medical condition on a child's neurodevelopmental functioning; examples of medical conditions that may impact on cognition and neurodevelopment include but are not limited to prematurity or low birth weight, birth trauma, in utero substance exposure, neurological conditions such as epilepsy, and congenital brain conditions;
- Identification of a child's strengths and weaknesses to assist in intervention planning;
- Identification of comorbid neuropsychological issues that may impact on a child's treatment or management;
- Assessment of children with complex learning difficulties, *only* if the child is unable to be seen in the community (e.g. if complex social or psychological factors prevent the child from accessing community-based services);

# Western Health Specialist Clinics Referral Guidelines

- Assessment of children with complex learning difficulties, *only* if the referral question is unable to be answered by the school's Educational Psychologist (for example, if a child presents with multiple comorbidities, also has a complex medical condition, or has a suspected developmental disorder that requires differential diagnosis). Children referred for learning difficulties assessments are required to have been assessed by a Psychologist through their school (or another service) prior to the referral being made.
- Providing information, advice, and support to staff, families, carers, teachers, community workers and other stake-holders regarding the nature of a child's neuropsychological presentation and appropriate management strategies.

To be eligible for the Paediatric Neuropsychology service a child must:

- Be referred by a Western Health medical or Allied Health clinician, or an external Paediatrician;
- Be under the continuing care of a Paediatrician;
- Be aged between 2 - 12 years at the time of referral.

## **Referrals not seen at Western Health as services not provided:**

Children will not be accepted to the Paediatric Neuropsychology clinic if they are:

- Aged under 2 or over 12 years
- Are currently receiving or eligible to receive support from an equivalent service
- Currently receiving support under the Department of Education Program for Students with Disabilities, unless the referral question is diagnostic in nature and unable to be addressed by the school's Educational Psychologist (or equivalent);
- Require a second opinion regarding an existing diagnosis unless there has been a significant change to the child's presentation since the original diagnosis was made;
- Require a neuropsychological review where there is no clear need or impact on the child's care or management simply because a review has been recommended in a previous neuropsychological report;
- Require assessment of uncomplicated learning difficulties assessments (i.e. learning difficulties are the key presenting problem and there are no additional comorbid issues, or complicating medical or social factors). These referrals should be re-directed to the child's educational institution;

# Western Health Specialist Clinics Referral Guidelines

- Require assessment of complex learning difficulties if the child has not already been assessed by the school Psychologist (or equivalent).

## Neuropsychology Alarm Symptoms:

- Where an acute intervention is required please refer the patient to the Emergency Department. If there is still concern regarding the referral please call the Paediatric Specialists Outpatient number 8345 1727 and a clinician will respond to your call within 1 business day.

## Access & Referral Priority Paediatric Neuropsychology:

The clinical information provided in your referral will determine the triage category. The triage category will affect the timeframe in which the patient is offered an appointment.

### URGENT

Appointment timeframe 30 days

- Patients who require an assessment to reduce the risk of significant deterioration or harm, for example
  - Where clarification of a diagnosis is urgently required to inform a time-critical decision such as school selection, and significant barriers exist to accessing alternative equivalent services.
  - Where an assessment is urgently required to inform time-critical medical management, such as monitoring of a child with a suspected neurodegenerative condition.

### ROUTINE

Appointment timeframe greater than 30 days, depending on clinical need.

- Patients who require an assessment for the purpose of clarifying a diagnosis.
- Patients with a medical condition who require neuropsychological characterisation to inform clinical management
- Patients who require neuropsychological assessment of complex learning difficulties *only* if the child is unable to be seen in the community or the referral question is unable to be answered by the school's Educational Psychologist.

# Western Health Specialist Clinics Referral Guidelines

## Condition Specific Referral Guidelines:

Key information enables Western Health to triage patients to the correct category and provide treatment with fewer visits to outpatients, creating more capacity for care. If key information is missing, you may be asked to return the referral with the required information.

Condition:	Key Information Points:	Clinical Investigations
<b>All children referred to Paediatric Neuropsychology</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Child's full name</li><li>• Child's date of birth</li><li>• Current address and telephone</li><li>• Full name of parent/s or guardian/s</li><li>• Reason for referral</li><li>• Summary of key issues</li><li>• Relevant medical and developmental history</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Copies of any previous assessments, including<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cognitive assessment</li><li>• Language assessment</li><li>• Developmental assessment</li><li>• Occupational Therapy assessment</li><li>• Audiology assessment</li></ul></li></ul>