

Wirral Children's Occupational Therapy Service DCD Team

Criteria for access to motor skills assessment and treatment

Criteria A – DCD PATHWAY

This criteria is for referral for assessment of children who have **motor skills difficulties** and meet the criteria for a potential diagnosis of Developmental Co-ordination Disorder (DCD).

Who can refer?

- All referrals must be made by a Paediatrician or GP to ensure that a post assessment diagnosis can be given to the child. A neurological screening needs to be completed prior to the referral being made to rule out any other neurological condition.

What is the referral criteria?

- Children aged between 5 – 16 years 11 months in mainstream schools.
- The Movement ABC checklist must indicate that the child has a difficulty i.e. scores within red and amber zones indicative of a motor skills difficulty.
- The child must meet the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5) criteria for developmental co-ordination disorder.
- Referrals will not be accepted for children who have already been seen through the pathway previously. As per Wirral University Teaching Hospital DCD Clinical guideline (June 2023) Paediatricians will discharge those children with a sole diagnosis of DCD once a diagnosis has been made.

The OT Service will not accept referrals for the following: -

- Handwriting / Dysgraphia / Dyslexia in the absence of a concern about other motor skill and functional skill deficits
- Referrals when the motor skill deficit can be better explained by intellectual disability, visual impairment or a neurological condition affecting movement (e.g., cerebral palsy, muscular dystrophy / degenerative muscle conditions, genetic disorders, tumours)
- Children with a global developmental delay whose motor skills are in line with their global level of development. Referrals will be accepted for children who have motor skill deficits in excess of their learning difficulties – please indicate this on the referral form.

How do I refer?

- Referrals must be made using the occupational therapy service DCD referral forms and must be accompanied by a Movement ABC II checklist (normally completed by the school nurse/teacher). The ABC II checklist needs to have been completed in a 12-month period prior to referral. The checklist must score in the red or amber zone to meet the criteria for referral. Forms which are not fully completed or referrals with an ABC II checklist over 12 months old will be returned to the referrer.

What is the assessment process?

- Following receipt of the referral, the parent/ guardian is required to complete a parent questionnaire. If the questionnaire is not returned a reminder letter and a second questionnaire will be sent out to the parent / guardian. Failure to return the second questionnaire within 1 month to the service will result in the child being discharged. Parents/guardians are advised of this in the letter sent accompanying the 2nd questionnaire.
- Once the questionnaire is received from the parent / guardian they are given the next available appointment to be seen by the Occupational Therapy Assistant at Cherry Tree House, Clatterbridge Hospital. During this 1-hour appointment the Test of Visual Perception (TVPS) and Visual Motor Integration (VMI) assessments are administered (screened as these skills form some of the foundations for handwriting development) – results interpreted and analysed by the Occupational Therapist prior to the next appointment. If the child does not attend this appointment they will be contacted and offered a 2nd appointment. If they do not attend a 2nd appointment, they will be discharged from OT service.
- In some circumstances the Occupational therapy team may make a clinical decision for the child to proceed directly to a motor skills assessment with an OT. For those children who would not cope with 2 separate appointments due to severe anxiety it is more important to get the motor skills test completed. For those children with significant learning challenges where sitting and doing perception tests would be too challenging.
- Parent(s) / Guardians are sent an appointment letter for a motor skills assessment with an OT at Cherry Tree House, Clatterbridge Hospital. During the motor skills appointment the ABC-2 standardised motor skill assessment is completed. Assessment and feedback can take 90 minutes to 2 hours.
- If the child does not attend this appointment they will be contacted and offered a 2nd appointment. If they do not attend a 2nd appointment, they will be discharged from OT service. If OT intervention is required in the

future a medical re-referral back to service will be required. Parents/guardians are advised of this in the letter sent to offer the 2nd appointment.

- A report will be produced within 10 working days of the completion of the assessment.
- Children who score below the 5th centile will be offered motor skills group treatment sessions. Children must have sufficient attention/ level of maturity to cope with groups, if not, advice will be provided for home.
- Children between 6th -15th centile will be offered motor skills group treatment sessions at the discretion of the assessing OT.
- Parent/ Guardian will be given an opt-in letter during motor skill appointment for the motor skills group treatment programme. They will then have 4 weeks to contact the OT service if they want to reserve a place on the programme. If no response within 4 weeks from the appointment date, they will be discharged from OT service.
- Once opted in for the motor skill group programme the child must access the service within a 12-month period from the date of the assessment. Failure to attend during this time period will result in the child being discharged. This information is written into the motor skill assessment report so that parents are aware of the criteria.
- Once the child has started the group programme, if for any reason they pause attendance then it will be up to the parent/ guardian to contact the OT department to opt back into the programme. If no contact is made within 12 months from date that they paused attendance the child will be discharged from OT service.
- Motor skills group treatment sessions run for 10 weeks, 5 weeks for gross motor skills and 5 weeks for fine motor skills, each session lasting 45 minutes at Cherry Tree House, CGH.
- If child does not attend 2 consecutive group sessions and there is no contact from parent/ guardian. The child will be discharged from the OT service.
- On completion of the 10-week motor skills group treatment programme the child will be discharged from the OT service. Parents are advised to continue with activity programme provided. Please note that group treatment programme can only be accessed once and a re referral will not be accepted.
- If deemed appropriate by the therapist, the child may be referred into the sensory education session pathway.

CRITERIA A – DCD PATHWAY

