



SEND the Right Message
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Dear David Burton Smith, MP

I am writing to you to raise concerns about the number of parents in your constituency who are experiencing indirect discrimination and health inequalities regarding the referral pathways for Autism and ADHD in the Southend area.

I contacted Hannah, the Director of the Lighthouse, last week to politely challenge this because I experienced it for my son. The Parent Carer Forums, commissioned by the DFE, should resolve these issues at the Strategic level with the LAs and the ICBs. However, due to the unnecessary and time-consuming work our charity is experiencing and the conversation with local parents, I had no choice but to intervene directly.

However, as a local grassroots charity, we are deeply affected by this issue. The incorrect advice from local GPs (which is not their fault) is causing us frustration and leaving SEND parents feeling frustrated, distressed, upset, and angry.

A formal referral usually involves a letter or form from your GP, health care practitioner or educational professional to the diagnostic service to carry out the **assessment**. Your GP is the primary route for **referral**, although, for some children and young people in some parts of the UK, it **may** be an educational professional who makes the referral.

- **Local GPs are advising parent carers as follows:**
- **The referral must be made by schools only**
- **The GP can only refer to a school report or a letter from the school.**

I wanted to clarify the information the local NHS diagnostic Centre is providing. There are clear differences between their website referral process and what information the GPs and PCNs are being advised. The referral, triage, and assessment process need to be more explicit, accurate and informative guidance.

Please refer to [NHS England » Accessible Information Standard](#), which these standards should be followed.

I would welcome the opportunity to join forces to champion the Right to Choose pathway, which can provide crucial support and other options to families in our local community.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Warm Regards

Maggie Cleary

CEO

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