

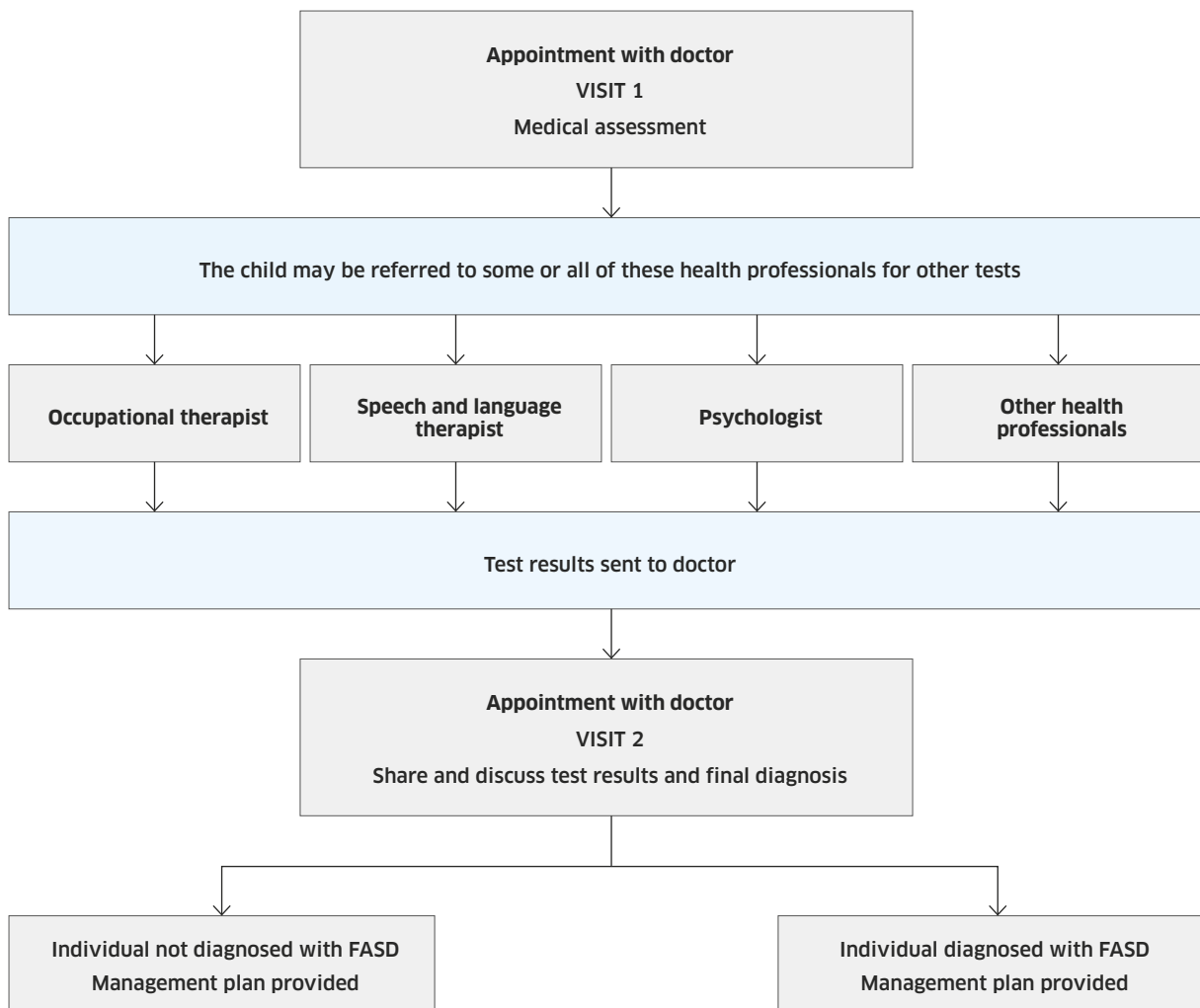
# Information on FASD assessment for individuals and caregivers

## Who is this information for?

Diagnostic assessment for Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) can be conducted with people of all ages. However diagnostic assessment is most commonly conducted with children under the age of 18 years. Ideally an individual should have a diagnostic assessment as early as possible. Sometimes in younger children parts of the assessment may need to be repeated when the child is older if the results are difficult to interpret.

The information in this document is for parents and caregivers. In this document the word 'child' refers to a person under the age of 18. However, the information could also be used to explain the FASD assessment to a person of any age undergoing diagnostic assessment. The number of appointments and how these are arranged will also depend on where a person has their assessment conducted, eg hospital or community clinic.

## What is involved in an assessment?



## What documents do I need?

The doctor will need to record some information about your child. As a parent or caregiver you may be asked to complete a form before you come to the appointment or to bring the information with you to the appointment. The following is a list of the type of information you may be asked to bring. You may not have all of this information but bring as much as you can:

- birth records – date of birth, weight, length
- personal child health records (Red Book) – history of growth, weight, height
- medical history such as illnesses, surgery, vision or hearing problems
- school reports and any issues that have been raised by teachers or the school
- photos of the child where you can see their face at different ages.

The doctor will complete a medical assessment which will include testing hearing and vision, measuring height and weight and reviewing the documents you have brought to the appointment. During your appointment tell the doctor about the child's strengths and weaknesses, behaviour, any memory problems and how they relate to other people. Depending on the age of the child, let them talk about their own experiences. The doctor may take a photo of the child's face or look at the face and take measurements.

Your child may be referred to other health professionals who are skilled in doing different assessments. Make sure you have clear instructions on where each appointment is, the time of each appointment, how long each appointment may take and what to do after all the assessments have been completed.

### *Occupational therapist*

The occupational therapist is concerned with the child's ability to participate in the various occupations of daily life to support their health, well-being and development. For a young child, assessment may involve their ability to get dressed, use the toilet, feed themselves, participate in school, handwriting and play. Finding out what matters most to them and their parents/carers is fundamental to occupational therapy assessment.

### *Speech and language therapist*

A speech and language therapist will assess understanding of language, use of language, verbal reasoning and use of speech sounds. For a young child this will involve talking with them and showing some pictures or toys, finding how many words they know, how well they can talk about things and how well they can understand words and questions.

### *Psychologist*

The psychological assessment involves tests of memory, problem solving skills, academic abilities and cognitive abilities (how we think, remember and learn). To assess a child, a psychologist, who has had special training in how children learn and how the brain works, will assess what your child knows and test their memory and understanding. This will involve answering questions, and for a young child working with puzzles and blocks and doing some writing activities.

### *Other health professionals*

A range of other health professionals could be consulted for their expertise, for example a geneticist or radiologist.

## What happens after all the assessments?

Usually your child will have another appointment with the doctor. You may like to ask a support person, friend or relative to accompany you to this appointment. The doctor will share and discuss the medical assessment and test results and final diagnosis which may be Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder or any other diagnosis. You or your support person should ask questions and request a copy of the findings and diagnosis. Discuss with the doctor what the 'next steps' are and plan where to go for treatment and services. Also ask if you can phone the doctor or someone in the team with questions once you have had time to read the information and discuss the diagnosis with members of your family.

If you would like to talk to someone before, during or after the diagnostic assessment, you can contact the named team member, FASD Scotland or the National Organisation for Foetal Alcohol Syndrome - UK.

## FASD support groups

### FASD Scotland

[www.fasdscotland.com](http://www.fasdscotland.com) | Email: [info@FASDscotland.com](mailto:info@FASDscotland.com)

FASD Scotland offers information and awareness about the lifelong risks of prenatal exposure to alcohol as well as support and advocacy to families caring for a child affected by FASD. It provides strategies for managing FASD and training for professionals involved with individuals affected by FASD. Through partnership with other agencies it aims to prevent FASD and reduce secondary disabilities.

### National Organisation for Foetal Alcohol Syndrome - UK

NOFAS UK  
022 China Works  
100 Black Prince Road, Lambeth  
London SE1 7SJ

Helpline: 020 8458 5951

[www.nofas-uk.org](http://www.nofas-uk.org) | Email: [help@nofas-uk.org](mailto:help@nofas-uk.org)

The NOFAS-UK Helpline responds to enquiries from parents, family members, carers and others needing advice or referrals for children with FASD disabilities. NOFAS-UK organises events focused on wellbeing for families and carers of children with FASD and provides resources that help support those with FASD at home and in school.