

Besides the obvious, cut waiting times and provide more funding for qualified councillors, and stop cutting mental health budgets.

Please after having to fight 4yrs to have my daughter even referred to ASD PATHWAYS, please have DRS or health visitors the authority to make referrals. My daughter was referred to CAMHS for depression and suicide thoughts because of bullying at school. During her first consultation the councillor asked if I had concerns with her as she felt my daughter needed to be assessed under ASD Pathways. Then began a 4yr battle with her school. My daughter has recently been diagnosed with Autism just before her 16th birthday. By then it was too late and the schools lack of understanding let her down. The school SENCO at the time refused to refer her as she didn't feel there was a problem. Later on she admitted she has no understanding of Autism. And actually had the nerve to tell my daughter she seemed "normal" to her. They did nothing to support her through her GCSE's other than lower her exam papers so she still attained a pass mark and the schools targets were reached.

From my experience Drs and other professionals identified my daughters Autism, yet the school refused to accept it. And currently it's the school that has to make the referral. Every parent evening I would attend to discuss my child I would tell each teacher individually, I had two teachers that understood and supported us. Please Give authority to Drs to refer for assessments or allow them to assess before referring. Health visitors they assess milestones why not have them train in behaviour as well as development, they too would be able to make the basic assessments to refer.

It's a long process you have to have a referral for an assessment to see if you qualify to go into the ASD Pathways. Assessment by Drs or Health visitor even school teachers would cut waiting time.

Additional training for existing teachers to educate them on how to identify and help a child with ASD needs. Introduce an ASD criteria as an individual course itself, into universities and colleges for those seeking careers with children.

Even with a diagnosis I still feel we have been let down, because of budget cuts and funding withdrawn, my daughter still has no support. We had a diagnosis and that's it, we have no understanding of what to do now. She attends college and

they are so understanding and supportive, yet as a family we have not been given support. What do we do? how do we recognise what we should be doing with my daughter if she reaches crises point? how are we meant to help her if we don't know ourselves? One simple solution would be introduce after diagnosis sessions, support groups. Anything that can help a family to understand and teach techniques. Get professionals to help train parents on how to prevent crises points there are so many parents who need this training and support.

From the ages of 16–18 yrs old there is no actual support. Please remember these kids don't stay in school forever, they have futures to live too.