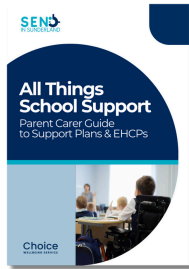
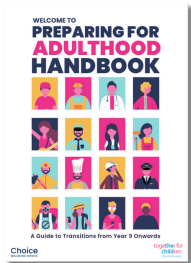
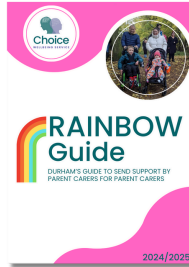
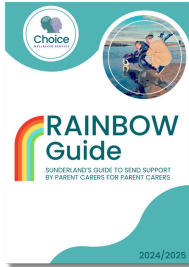


Here are just a few more guides we have available!



Guides on specific subjects

Rainbow Guides



Transitions Guides

Pathological Demand Avoidance

Parent Carer Guide to PDA

Your Child, Your Choice

Because one size doesn't fit all

Find our website here:



Choice
WELLBEING SERVICE



Pathological Demand Avoidance (PDA) is a profile that is often seen in individuals with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). It is characterised by an overwhelming need to avoid everyday demands and expectations, even those that seem relatively simple or enjoyable to others. This avoidance stems from anxiety and a strong desire to maintain control over their environment and choices.



Here are some key features of PDA:


- **Extreme Demand Avoidance:** Individuals with PDA exhibit a strong resistance to any demands placed upon them, regardless of their importance or who makes the request.
- **Anxiety and Control:** Anxiety is a core feature of PDA, and the need to be in control is a way to manage this anxiety. Demands are perceived as threats to their autonomy, triggering anxiety and avoidance behaviours.
- **Social Strategies:** People with PDA often use social strategies, such as distraction, negotiation, or even manipulation, to avoid complying with demands.
- **Emotional Fluctuations:** They may experience sudden and intense mood swings, shifting from cooperation to resistance quickly.
- **Difficulties with Social Understanding:** While individuals with PDA may appear socially capable, they often struggle with deeper social understanding and may have difficulty forming and maintaining relationships.

It's important to note that PDA is not a separate diagnosis in itself, but rather a profile within the autism spectrum. If you suspect your child might have PDA, it's crucial to seek a professional assessment from a specialist with expertise in autism.

Understanding PDA can be key to supporting individuals with this profile. By recognising their anxiety and need for control, and adapting communication and interaction styles, parents, carers, and educators can help reduce anxiety and foster a more positive and supportive environment.

PDA turns "parenting norms" upside down, so our own mindset and mood are key factors in developing a toolkit of helpful approaches. Some key pointers are:

- Look beyond surface behaviours – outward behaviours are just the tip of the iceberg with many contributory factors lying below the surface as explained above.
- Re-balance your relationship – a more equal relationship between child and adult, based on collaboration and respect, builds trust. Try to aim for win:win solutions.
- Keep calm and carry on – try not to take things personally; model desired behaviours; pick your battles; treat every day as a fresh start.
- Focus on the long term objective of building a child's ability to cope rather than short term compliance.
- Be flexible – helpful approaches require creativity and adaptability.
- See the positives – whilst supporting our children's challenges, try not to lose sight of their many positive qualities.
- Support and self-care for you – being in touch with others who are having similar experiences can be enormously helpful and local families may have invaluable tips.



For more information and support, check out National Autism Society here:

