

# Raja and Neil's FASD Book Club

## The Role of Formal Psychometric Assessment in FASD



Alex Carlisle is a Clinical Psychologist, Neurodevelopmental Specialist Clinician and Lead at the National Clinic for FASD.



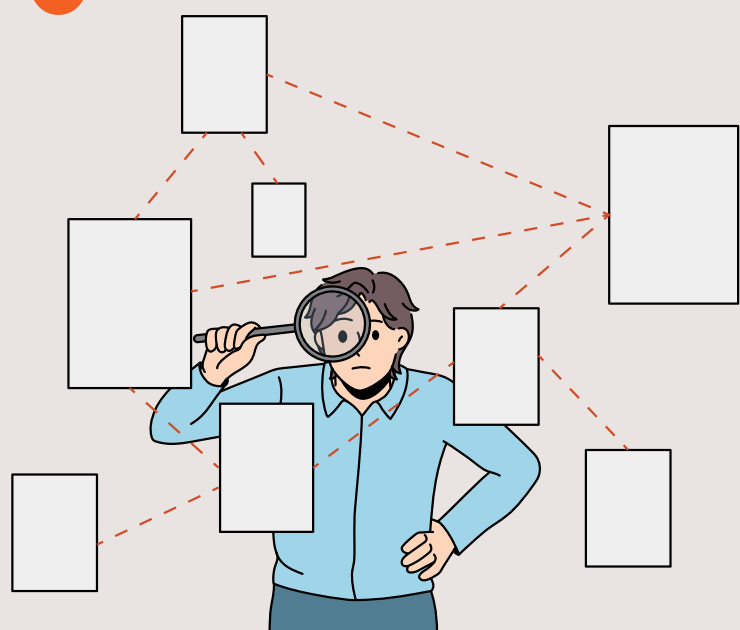
Alex Livesey is also a Clinical Psychologist at the National Clinic for FASD. Both Alex and Alex are experts in doing tests to explain how the brains of people with FASD work.



Their session explained how they use 'psychometric tests' to make an FASD diagnosis.

'Psychometric' means their tests explore how you think, and they also look at emotions, behaviours, and relationships.

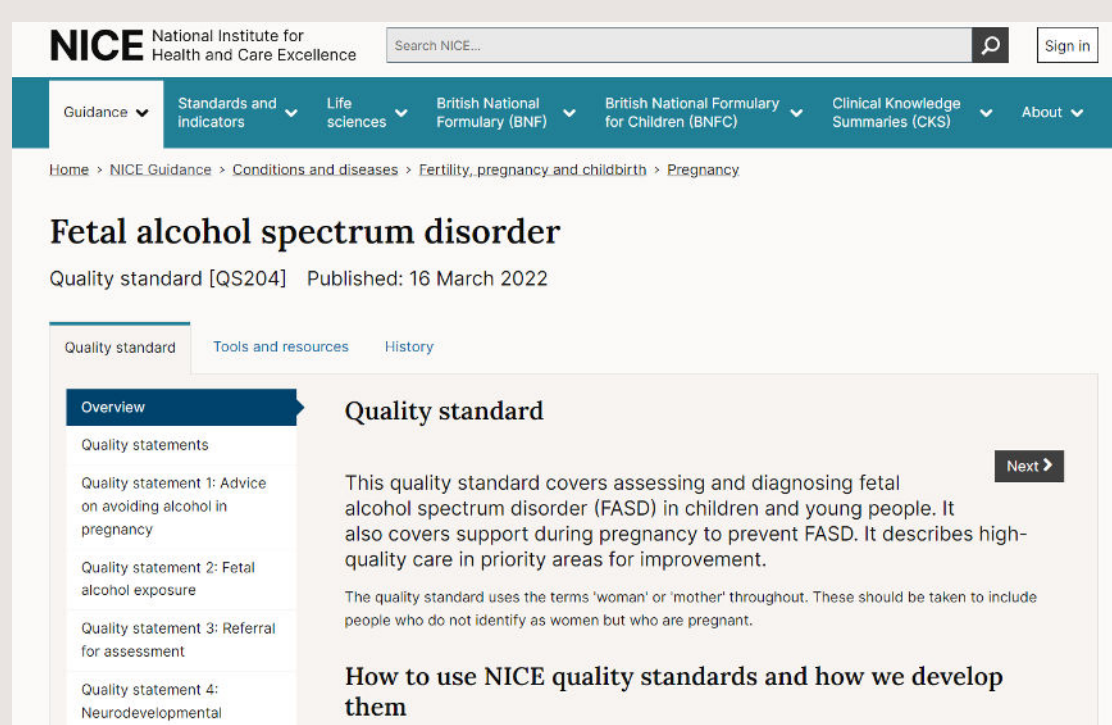
# SIGN-156 - the guideline for diagnosing FASD in Scotland, England, and Wales



Alex & Alex explained what kind of information they collect to help them, and how they collect it.



At the National Clinic for FASD, they diagnose FASD using guidelines from SIGN-156.



SIGN-156 is a piece of Scottish healthcare policy about FASD that has now been adopted by England and Wales. It is the basis for another important document called the NICE Quality Standard on FASD.



SIGN-156 is the guide on what doctors should look for when they make an FASD diagnosis.

# Diagnosing FASD using SIGN-156



The first thing that psychologists using SIGN-156 to make an FASD diagnosis will look for is whether there is any record of the person being exposed to alcohol in the womb.



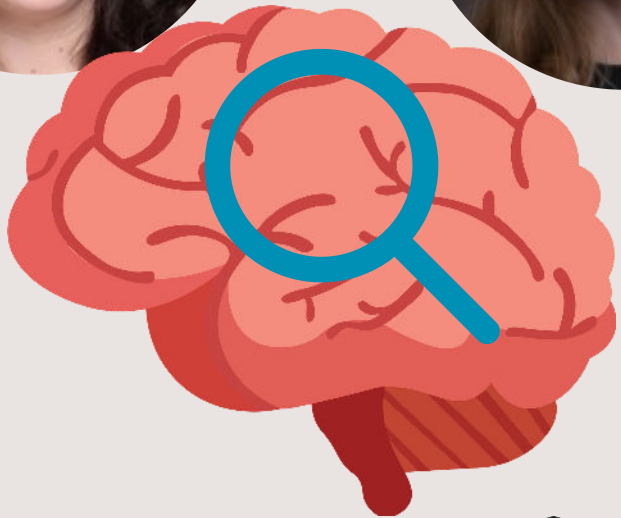
They will then look for the 3 'sentinel facial features' that are found in a small number of people with FASD.

DHSC FASD Needs Assessment



After that, they will try to understand how the person's brain works and how the person's central nervous system may have been affected by alcohol in the womb.

# Direct and Indirect Assessments



Alex & Alex's work looks mainly at the brain and central nervous system part of the process.

They collect information about the person using direct and indirect assessments.



They find out how a person behaves in different situations, like at school or at home.



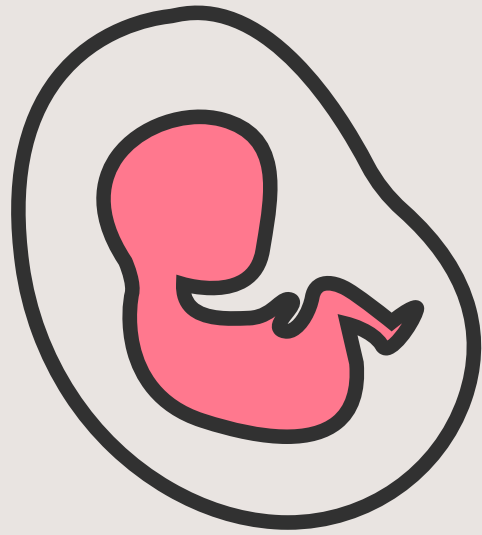
They also have tests and questionnaires that help them see how people think, communicate and cope with sensory challenges. This isn't like school, there are no right or wrong answers on these tests.

# Challenges doctors face



Because FASD is complex and linked with lots of other conditions, all people with FASD are unique.

There are 3 main things that can cause differences between how FASD affects people:



**1** - Being exposed to different amounts of alcohol in the womb and at different times.



**2** - Things that the person might have inherited from their parents (genetics).



**3** - The way that the world around that person affected how they developed.

# What they are looking for

When they do their direct and indirect assessments with a person who might have FASD, doctors are looking for issues with 3 or more of these:



1- How well they can do everyday tasks and make good decisions.



2- The way their brain is built.



3 - How they do at school.



4 - How well they can focus on a particular thing.



5 - How well they can move their body.

# What they are looking for (continued)



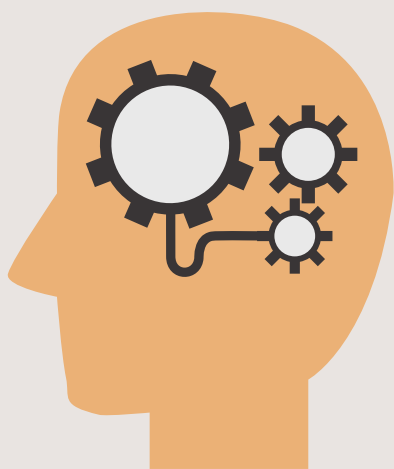
**6** - How they work with other people and cope with changing situations.



**7** - How well they can speak and understand other people.



**8** - How well they can regulate their emotions.



**9** - How their memory works.

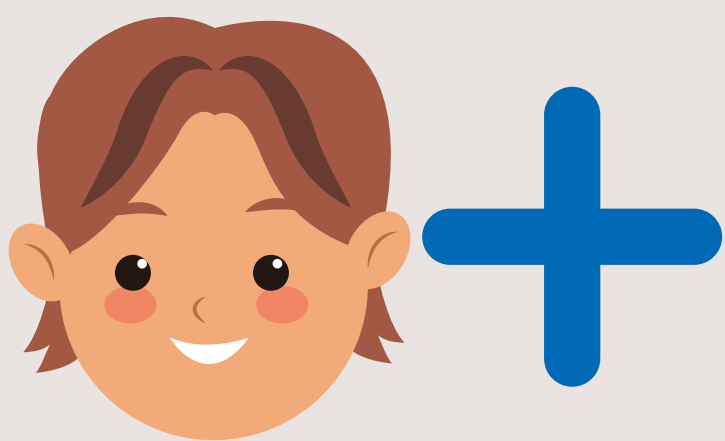


**10** - How well they can understand information.

# After the tests



After the tests, people are divided into one of 4 categories:



**1 - FASD with sentinel facial features**



**2 - FASD without sentinel facial features**



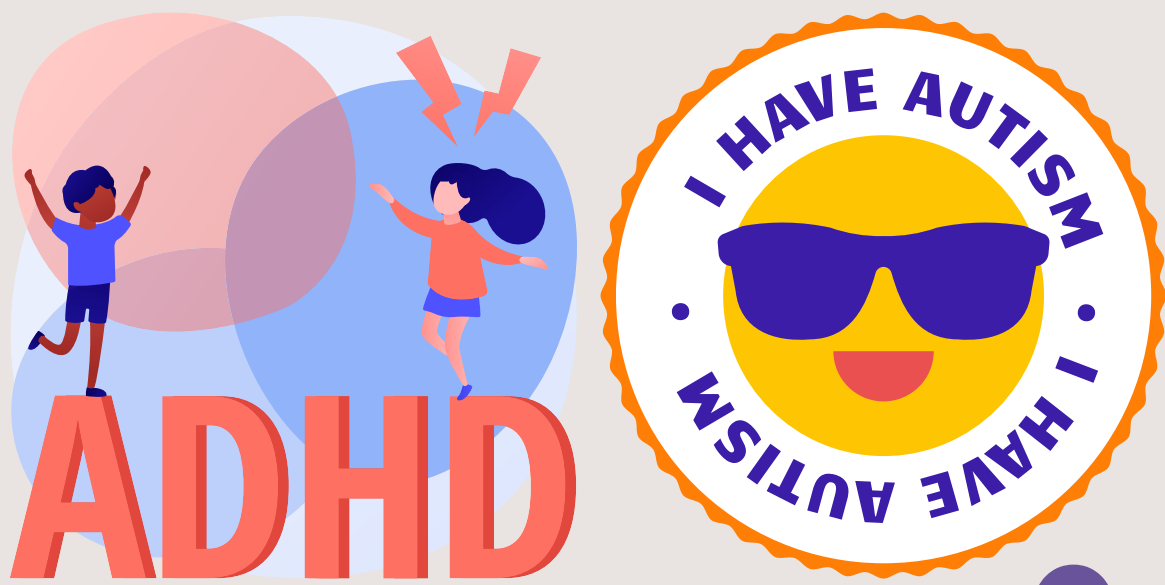
**3 - No FASD**



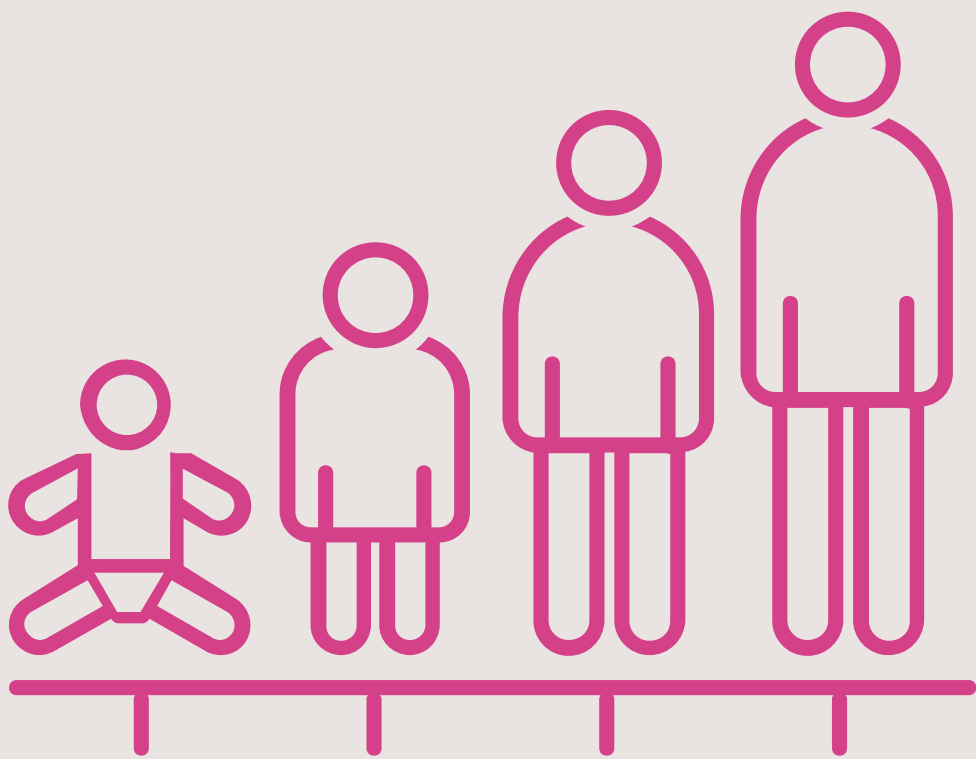
**4 - 'At risk' or in need of further assessment**



# Beyond the FASD assessment



When assessing people for FASD, it's also important that the doctors look for other conditions like ADHD and autism.



Sometimes it's hard to diagnose people with FASD when they are younger.

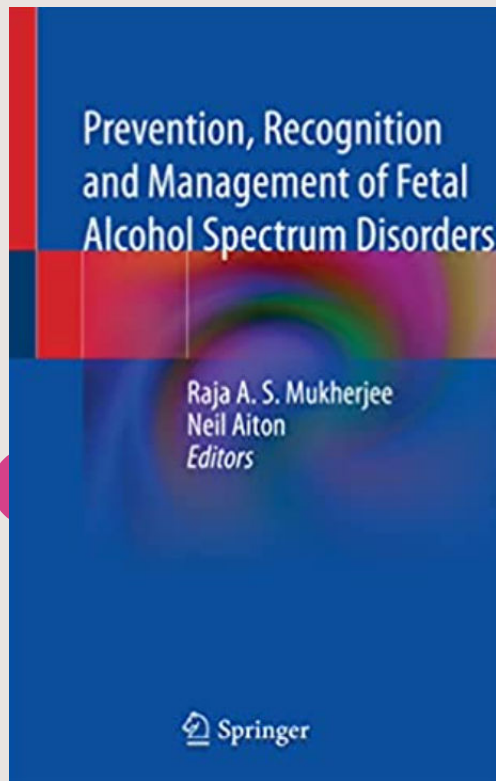


This is because FASD can become more obvious as people get older. Also sometimes things change for people who are diagnosed with FASD when they are young.



This is why it's important that people with possible FASD are assessed at different stages in their lives.

# What is Raja & Neil's FASD Bookclub?



Prof Raja Mukherjee and Dr Neil Aiton wrote a book for other doctors about FASD. But they hope more people can access the information.



In this online book club people who wrote chapters give 15- minute talks about what they wrote and then they answer questions.



After each book club, the talks are shared on National FASD's YouTube channel.



You don't have to read the book. It's expensive because it's for libraries and universities. But if you want to order it, it's here:

<https://tinyurl.com/RajaAndNeilFASDBook>