Substantially altered level of activity or abnormal behaviour

Catatonia diagnosed with ≥3 features?

- Yes
  - Consider alternative diagnoses

- No
  - Unclear
  - Lorazepam challenge

- In ASD, there must be a marked change from baseline

Assessment in secondary care

- Interact with the patient as if they are aware of what is taking place
- History and collateral history
- Physical examination
- Use validated catatonia instrument (e.g. BFCRS or PCRS)
- Consider appropriate legal framework where patient unable to make decisions
- Investigations as indicated by history and examination, e.g. blood tests, urine drug screen, lumbar puncture, EEG, neuroimaging
  - If 1st episode or diagnosis unclear, consider neuroimaging and autoantibodies in serum + CSF
  - If risk factors for seizures, possible evidence of seizure or possible encephalitis, consider an EEG (with continuous monitoring if available)
- Lorazepam challenge (if not performed above)

Prompt treatment.

Not always necessary to wait for results from investigations

Prevent & manage complications of catatonia

- Antipsychotic-induced catatonia: stop antipsychotic → benzodiazepine
- Benzodiazepine withdrawal catatonia: restart benzodiazepine
- Chronic, mild catatonia in schizophrenia: clozapine trial
- Clozapine withdrawal catatonia: restart clozapine → ECT
- Malignant catatonia: stop dopamine antagonists → lorazepam → ECT
- NMS: stop dopamine antagonists & anticholinergics → supportive medical care → other treatments (see section 8.3)
- Perinatal period: see section 9.3

Treat underlying disorder.
If antipsychotics used, prescribe with caution.

ASD and mild catatonia

Psychological interventions and/or lorazepam

Lorazepam

ECT

Lithium

Relapse prevention in periodic catatonia

Re-evaluate diagnosis

NMDA receptor antagonist

Abbreviations
- ASD - autism spectrum disorder
- BFCRS - Bush-Francis Catatonia Rating Scale
- CSF - cerebrospinal fluid
- ECT - electroconvulsive therapy
- EEG - electroencephalography
- NMDA - N-methyl-D-aspartate
- NMS - neuroleptic malignant syndrome
- PCRS - Pediatric Catatonia Rating Scale