

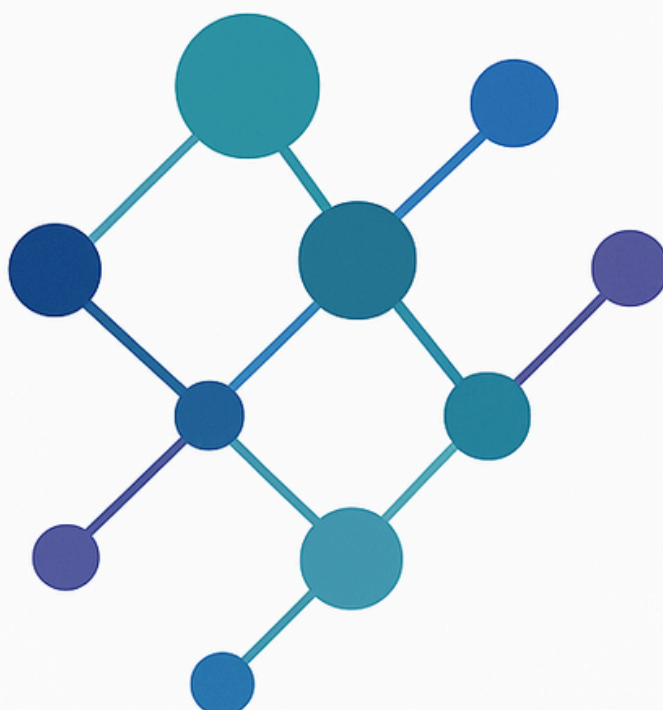


**Humber and North Yorkshire**  
Health and Care Partnership



# Autism and ADHD Patient Choice

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)



May 2025  
Version 1

# Introduction

In Humber and North Yorkshire, patients may have the legal right to choose who provides their Autism or ADHD assessment under the Right to Choose (also known as Patient Choice) framework.

This means that if your GP agrees that an assessment is appropriate, you may be able to choose from a list of NHS approved providers, including some independent services. These providers must:

- Hold an NHS contract with an Integrated Care Board (ICB)
- Be led by a named consultant or specialist
- Offer both assessment and treatment where required

This choice can give you more control over your care and in some cases help reduce waiting times. However, Right to Choose is only available to patients registered with a GP in England and there are some exclusions (e.g. emergency care, people in the armed forces, or those already receiving ongoing treatment for autism or ADHD).

It's important to check that any provider you are referred to also offers ongoing treatment, such as ADHD medication support. If they don't and you need treatment after your assessment you may need to return to your local NHS service which could mean going back on a waiting list.

We know that patient choice around Autism and ADHD assessments can feel complicated. Many patients, families and professionals have questions about how it works in practice. This document has been created to answer some of the most frequently asked questions, clarify the process and help you make informed decisions about your care.

The information is accurate as of May 2025 and has been developed with the input of professionals and people with lived experience across Humber and North Yorkshire.

If you spot anything that needs updating or if there's more information you'd find helpful about Patient Choice for Autism and ADHD assessments in this area, please let us know: [\*\*hnyicb-ny.adultnd@nhs.net\*\*](mailto:hnyicb-ny.adultnd@nhs.net)





## **Thinking You Might Be Autistic or Have ADHD**

### **What should I do if I think I might be autistic or have ADHD?**

If you're struggling with things like concentration, emotions, routines, social interactions or sensory sensitivities and you think autism or ADHD might be the reason the best place to start is by speaking to your GP. You can also speak to a healthcare professional, SENCO or a specialist in your local area.

### **What should I say to my GP or healthcare professional?**

Be honest about your difficulties at school, work, in relationships, or daily life. Let them know why you think autism or ADHD might be involved. You don't need a formal diagnosis to ask for help.

You could also talk about the areas of life where you're struggling and what kind of support might help. This could include support from school or college, your employer, mental health services, social care, or local voluntary organisations. A diagnosis can help explain your experiences, but it is not always needed for you to access reasonable adjustments, advice, or support. Many services work on a needs-led basis so it's okay to ask for help even if you're still waiting for, or not seeking, an assessment.



## **Getting a Referral for an Assessment**

### **What happens during the GP appointment?**

Your GP will listen to your concerns and look at whether you meet the criteria for an autism or ADHD assessment. If it seems appropriate they can refer you. They should also talk to you about your choices including the option of using Right to Choose (sometimes called Patient Choice).

### **What does “clinically appropriate” mean?**

This just means the doctor or professional believes there are clear signs that an autism or ADHD assessment is needed. This decision is based on:

- Your symptoms and how they affect everyday life.
- Whether the symptoms fit official guidance (like DSM-5 or ICD-11).
- A review of your past and present difficulties.
- Making sure there isn't another cause for your symptoms.
- The referral being made by someone like a GP or designated local team.

### **What if they don't think an assessment is right for me?**

If your doctor doesn't think an assessment is appropriate they should still help you find other suppo. This might include mental health support, learning support or local neurodiversity services.



## **Understanding Right to Choose (Patient Choice)**

### **What is Right to Choose?**

Right to Choose is a legal right that allows patients registered with a GP in England to choose where they receive NHS funded assessment and treatment for certain conditions, including Autism and ADHD. The provider must have a valid NHS contract and the referral must be for a first outpatient appointment that is clinically appropriate.

### **When does Right to Choose apply?**

You can use Right to Choose if:

- You're registered with a GP in England.
- You've been offered a referral for your first assessment.
- The provider you want is NHS approved (has an NHS Standard Contract).
- You are not already receiving treatment for autism or ADHD.
- You're not in prison, hospital under the Mental Health Act or the armed forces.

### **Can I use Right to Choose for a second opinion or reassessment?**

No. Right to Choose only applies to the first referral for a new episode of care. It cannot be used for a second opinion, reassessment or follow up if you've already received a diagnosis.



## **Choosing an Assessment Provider**

### **Who can help me choose a provider?**

Your GP or healthcare professional should explain your options and how to pick a provider. You can also research providers online using patient reviews or NHS ratings.

### **Can I choose any provider?**

No. You can only choose a provider that:

- Holds a valid NHS Standard Contract
- Offers services for your age group
- Is led by a consultant or a registered mental health professional

Your GP will check that the provider meets these criteria before referring you.

### **How do I find a provider that accepts Right to Choose referrals?**

You can look for providers who list that they accept referrals under Right to Choose and hold a contract with an ICB or NHS England.

### **Does the provider need to be local?**

No, you can choose providers from anywhere in England as long as they meet the NHS requirements. Some offer online assessments or clinics in different parts of the country.



## **Making the Referral**

### **Who can refer me under Right to Choose?**

Only a GP (or in some areas, an ICB commissioned interface service) can refer under Right to Choose. Schools or other professionals cannot make Right to Choose referrals.

### **Can I refer myself?**

Some providers allow self referrals, but these are not covered by Right to Choose and would be selffunded. Right to Choosere ferrals must come from a GP.

### **What if my GP doesn't know about Right to Choose?**

You can show them the NHS Choice Framework and explain your right to choose. You could also contact your local Integrated Care Board (ICB) or the NHS complaints service for support.

### **Do I need approval from the ICB to use Right to Choose?**

No. You don't need special approval. As long as the referral is:

- Clinically appropriate.
- Sent to a provider with an NHS contract.
- For the right age group.
- To a service led by a named consultant or clinician.

Then the referral should go ahead.

### **Can I be on more than one waiting list at the same time?**

No. You can only be on one NHS waiting list for the same condition. If you choose a new provider under Right to Choose, you must be removed from your existing waiting list.



## **After the Referral – Waiting for Assessment**

### **How long will I wait?**

It depends on the provider you choose. Some Right to Choose providers have shorter waiting times than local NHS services, but demand is increasing. You should be told what to expect when referred.

### **Can I change my mind about the provider?**

Yes, but you'll need to speak to your GP again to make a new referral to a different provider. You may lose your place in the waiting list.





## During the Assessment

### **What happens in an autism or ADHD assessment?**

This varies between providers but usually involves:

- Talking about your life, school, work and social history.
- Questionnaires or interviews.
- Sometimes additional reports from school, work or family.
- The assessment may take place in person or online.

### **What happens if I don't get a diagnosis?**

If you're assessed and don't meet the criteria for a diagnosis, the provider should still advise on other ways to support your needs. You don't need a diagnosis to access support.



## **After Diagnosis**

### **What happens if I get a diagnosis?**

You'll usually receive a report confirming the diagnosis and explaining the next steps. The provider should offer you postdiagnosis support or signpost you to services.

### **Will I get help with medication for ADHD?**

If medication is needed, the provider may prescribe it. Once the dose is stable, they might ask your GP to take over the prescription under a shared care agreement

### **What is a shared care agreement?**

This is an agreement between the Right to Choose provider and your GP. It allows the GP to prescribe your medication and monitor you, based on guidance from the specialist. GPs don't have to accept this and if they don't the provider must keep prescribing and monitoring.

### **Can I choose a different provider for treatment after my assessment?**

You must stay with the same provider for both assessment and treatment. Right to Choose cannot be used for medication only services or to switch providers after diagnosis.

### **What if I've taken a break from treatment and want to restart?**

You must contact your original provider directly. Many providers have policies that if treatment is paused for a certain period (e.g. 3 months), you may be discharged. In these cases, NHS treatment may involve longer waits or require new referrals, but Right to Choose does not apply again.



## Medication and Tests

### **Will my GP have to arrange blood tests or ECGs before I start ADHD medication?**

No. The provider is responsible for arranging any health checks, like heart rate, blood pressure or ECGs before starting medication.

### **What happens if I change GP practice after diagnosis?**

Your new GP will need to agree to shared care. The Right to Choose provider should contact them. If the new GP refuses, the provider must continue prescribing and monitoring.

### **Can I use c just to access ADHD medication?**

No. Right to Choose cannot be used for medication only services. The provider must offer both assessment and treatment as a full pathway.

### **What if I want my GP to prescribe after an Right to Choose assessment?**

This depends on whether your GP agrees to a shared care arrangement. GPs are not required to take on prescribing unless they feel it is safe and appropriate.

### **Will I wait longer for medication if I move back into NHS care after Right to Choose?**

Yes. There are often delays when returning to local NHS services, especially if shared care is not agreed. We advise staying with the same provider for both assessment and treatment, where possible.

### **Does my GP have to do ECGs or tests requested by Right to Choose providers?**

No. The Right to Choose provider is responsible for arranging and carrying out any tests required as part of their treatment pathway.



## **When Right to Choose Doesn't Apply**

### **When can't I use Right to Choose?**

You can't use it if:

- You're already receiving care for autism or ADHD (unless it's a new episode).
- You're in urgent or emergency care.
- You're in prison or secure accommodation.
- You're under the Mental Health Act.
- You're in the armed forces.
- You're registered with a GP outside of England.



## If Something Goes Wrong

### **What can I do if my GP refuses to refer me?**

Ask why and check whether you meet the clinical criteria. If you still think you're eligible, you can:

- Refer them to the NHS Choice Framework.
- Contact your local ICB.
- Make a complaint via the NHS complaints process.

### **Do I need to apply for Individual Funding (IFR) to use Right to Choose?**

No. IFRs are only needed for treatments not usually funded. Right to Choose is already part of NHS care and doesn't require a special funding request.

