

Advice on seeking Neurodevelopmental Independent Assessments

It is recognised that the current waiting times for Autism and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) assessments are long. The number of requests for assessment received each month is much higher than our NHS neurodevelopmental teams can manage. For this reason, parents, carers and concerned adults are exploring other ways to ensure their child can be seen quickly, which includes paying for private (independent) assessments or asking their GP for their [Right To Choose](#) a provider.

In Norfolk and Waveney, there are many different services who can complete assessments. Some only work for the NHS, paid for by the Integrated Care Board (ICB). Some will be private (independent) providers who are helping NHS services with their waiting times and have an NHS contract. These may also be referred to as Right to Choose/Patient Choice providers. Others will be private providers who do not have an NHS contract but are still qualified.

All professionals in these services, must follow the same quality standards, regardless of whether they work privately or for the NHS. This is to make sure that any assessment and possible diagnosis, has considered all reasons why your child may need extra help and support. Guidance on quality standards is made by the National Institute for [Health and Care Excellence \(NICE\)](#).

If you are thinking about paying for a private assessment it is important that you ask some questions about the service you can expect to receive.

Whether your child is being assessed privately or by the NHS, the professionals involved should have the right qualifications and training and be registered with relevant regulatory bodies*. Be aware that membership of a professional body (for example the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy, British Psychological Society and National UK Therapists Register etc.) is not the same as a regulatory body.

To find out whether someone is qualified, and registered with an appropriate regulatory body you can check the websites for the [Health and Care Professions Council \(HCPC\)](#), [Nursing and Midwifery Council \(NMC\)](#), or [General Medical Council \(GMC\)](#). The provider may also be registered with the [Care Quality Commission \(CQC\)](#), and you can search the website to find out more about their last inspection. You should also check that the organisation is registered on [Companies House](#).

Your child should be seen face-to-face, usually in their school, so check that this will happen. A diagnostic process should be done at a minimum by a multi-disciplinary team. A multi-disciplinary team involves the collective input of a range of qualified professionals rather than views from a single practitioner who may be trained in a variety of areas. You should therefore expect to have more than one professional involved in the assessment so do ask who is in the team. You should also expect the multi-disciplinary team to consult with other professionals involved with your child, such as their teachers/SENCo. You should also check with the provider that your child is screened for other conditions as part of the process.

If the provider is contracted by the NHS under Right to Choose you should check that they are contracted under the NHS' child/young person pathway, rather than for adults.

After the assessment, you should receive a detailed report that describes your child, suggests what reasonable adjustments might need to be made and how professionals can support them. It might also list local agencies who can help you. The report should be individualised and tailored specifically to your child.

Costs will vary, so you should expect all costs upfront and check you understand what these include. If medication is recommended by the private provider, ask questions about how ongoing prescription charges are going to be paid for.

Most importantly, if you are uncertain about the outcome or quality of the assessment, you should talk with the private provider within six weeks. Requests for a second opinion will mean joining the NHS waiting list in your local area.

Most providers will deliver quality assessments and accurate diagnostic input; however, we do strongly advise parents to follow this guidance as there could be a risk that, where providers are not working in the right way, the assessment might not properly reflect your child and could therefore lead to the wrong support or adjustments being suggested.

There is also a risk that if a private diagnostic assessment is provided as part of an assessment for an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) but has not been undertaken to the right quality standard it may not be relied upon for consideration and inclusion in the EHCP assessment or final plan.

Please remember that, while a diagnosis can be important for families, support for special educational needs should not depend on a clinical diagnosis. Support for your child's special educational needs should be needs led rather than a diagnostic approach. To find out about how special educational needs are supported in educational establishments in Norfolk, you can speak to your SENCO and visit the [Norfolk Local Offer](#).

The Integrated Care Board is intending to increase the number of private providers who can hold an NHS contract for Autism and ADHD assessments for children and young People. In the next few months, there will be a provider framework in place and more information will follow about who is on that list. In the meantime, to know more about who has an NHS contract, please contact the ICB team by email: nwicb.contactus@nhs.net or phone: **01603 595857**

*Regulatory bodies are organisations that set clinical and professional standards for the medical and clinical professions/organisations. They have the ability to formally intervene and use powers such as closing practices, restricting or barring individuals from practice.

Useful links:

Quality Care Commission (CQC)

www.cqc.org.uk

The Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC)

www.hcpc-uk.org

The Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC)

www.nmc.org.uk

The General Medical Council (GMC)

www.gmc-uk.org

Norfolk Local Offer – private diagnostic assessments

www.norfolk.gov.uk/article/40860/Private-neurodevelopmental-assessments

Companies House

www.gov.uk/get-information-about-a-company

Right to Choose (NHS England)

<https://adhduk.co.uk/right-to-choose>

National Institute of Health and Care Excellence (NICE)

www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg128/

Norfolk Local Offer - support for SEND in schools / education establishments

www.norfolk.gov.uk/article/40537/Education-and-learning