

What is neurodiversity?

People experience and interact with the world in different ways and there is no one right way of thinking, learning and behaving. Neurodiversity is a word used to describe the different thinking styles that may affect how people communicate with the world around them. It reflects normal variations in brain function and behaviour. Neurodiversity can affect someone's behaviour, memory, or ability to learn but this is not always the case. It is an umbrella term - a word that sums up lots of different things. Neurodiversity includes autism, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), dyslexia, dyspraxia, dyscalculia, and Tourette's

If you have questions or concerns about your child or young person's thinking, learning or behaviour and would like to understand how you can support them, it is worthwhile talking to any professional who has regular contact with your child, about your concerns to see what help may be available. For school age children and young people, concerns and observations should be discussed in the first instance with the young person's teacher or Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo) as there are lots of things that you and the school can do to help your young person without further assessment.

Every local Council will have a 'Local Offer', which is available online. The local offer details all the help and services available for young people with additional needs in that area.

The Norfolk Local offer can be found [here](#). For Waveney Families, the Suffolk Local offer can be found [here](#).

Support for neurodivergent children and young people should be coordinated across education, health and care and support needs will be different for each individual and their families.

For some children and families, it may be necessary to seek further help through an assessment of possible neurodiversity.

Professionals who can refer children and young people for Neurodevelopmental Services, assessment and support

Requests for Assessment from Schools

Within Norfolk and Waveney, schools can now directly request assessment from NHS Neurodevelopmental services for children and young people. NHS services who accept requests directly from schools are:

- Norfolk Community Health and Care (NCHC) for Central and West Norfolk
- James Paget University Hospital (JPUH) for Great Yarmouth and Waveney

Families and education colleagues are advised to look at the service websites to see what supporting information will be required to send to services as part of the request. Detailed information from parents and carers, plus information from other professionals (such as teacher/SENCo) relating to neurodevelopmental difficulties is usually required to be submitted alongside the request form.

The NCHC website can be found [here](#) and the JPUH [here](#).

Requests for Assessment from GPs

Not all children and young people attend a school setting so GPs can also still refer to NHS assessment services as well make referrals for those wishing to take up their Right to Choose.

When and How to Access Support

If you, your young person's teacher/SENCo or GP have decided that an assessment may be required, it does not mean that you need to wait to access support.

It is important to note that confirmation of neurodiversity is not required to access support for your child at school or pre-school so you should talk to the school staff to ask what they can do to help.

There are other services, charities and support groups who will also be happy to help without a formal confirmation that your child or young person is neurodivergent. Details of local organisations can be found here: [Quick Guide to Neurodevelopmental Support \(justonenorfolk.nhs.uk\)](http://justonenorfolk.nhs.uk)

What is Patient Choice / Right to choose for children and young people?

In many cases you have the right to choose where you have your NHS treatment. The NHS is offering more options to help you to make choices that best suit your circumstances, giving you greater control of your care, and hopefully better results.

If a GP needs to refer you for a physical, behavioural, or mental health concern, in most cases you have the right to choose the hospital or service you would like to go to.

This will include many private hospitals and independent providers if they already provide services to the NHS and it does not cost the NHS any more than a referral to a standard NHS hospital.

You can also choose a clinical team led by a consultant or named healthcare professional, if that service provides the treatment you require, and they have an NHS contract.

Neurodevelopmental Assessments and Right to Choose

NHS Norfolk and Waveney has published a patient choice policy available here [Patient choice at the point of referral](#). It includes information about children's neurodevelopmental assessment services and is available online or can be requested from Norfolk and Waveney ICB. Your GP will decide if a referral to an alternative provider is appropriate.

For children and young people up to 18 years, if your provider of choice is not listed on the page below, please send details of your proposed chosen provider with a contact name to nwicb.cypm@nhs.net NHS Norfolk and Waveney will need to be assured that the provider holds an NHS contract for services included in the request.

Please bear in mind that there is no guarantee your request will be accepted by the providers.

Are there any exclusions?

Please refer the choice policy for information for information on exclusion criteria. The choice Policy is available [here](#).

Current Right to Choose providers on the NHS Norfolk and Waveney Provider Framework

NHS Norfolk and Waveney have quality assured the following providers to ensure that they meet our criteria for Neurodevelopmental assessment services:

Provider	Services available
Help for Psychology	Autism Assessment ADHD Assessment Dual Assessment Provider can offer initiation and titration of ADHD medication following assessment. www.help4psychology.co.uk
The Owl Centre	Autism Assessment ADHD Assessment Dual Assessment Provider can offer initiation and titration of ADHD medication following assessment. www.theowl.org
Evolve Psychology	Autism Assessment ADHD Assessment Dual Assessment *Note: if ADHD Prescribing is recommended following diagnosis, patient would need onward referral (Evolve Psychology can make this referral directly but it will incur further waits for the child or young person) www.evolvepsychology.org
Paloma Health	Autism Assessment only www.paloma.health

Other Right to Choose Providers

NHS Norfolk and Waveney ICB are aware that the providers listed below do also provide services for other NHS Integrated Care Boards. However, the ICB are unable to advise on the quality of these providers as there has been no local quality assurance. It should be noted that if these providers advise that medication might be appropriate, it may not be possible to arrange this through local NHS services:

Provider	Assessment Type	Website
ADHD 360	ADHD	www.adhd-360.com
Provide Wellbeing	Autism	www.providewellbeing.co.uk
RTN Mental Health Solutions	Autism	www.rtnmentalhealthsolutions.com

Advice for Families Considering Independent or Private Assessments

If you are thinking about getting a private or independent assessment, these are typically paid for by the family and not by the NHS. Costs can vary, so make sure you fully understand what is included.

NHS Norfolk and Waveney have created guidance for families who are considering independent assessments.

This includes important information to think about before you proceed, like shared care arrangements if medication is recommended. You can find this guidance here: [seeking-independent-neurodevelopmental-assessments.pdf \(justonenorfolk.nhs.uk\)](https://www.justonenorfolk.nhs.uk/seeking-independent-neurodevelopmental-assessments.pdf)

Access to medication for ADHD after non-NHS funded Independent/

Private assessment/Right to Choose

While medication is not the first option for treating ADHD, it is important to be aware that when it is proposed, not all private providers or those offering services through the Right to Choose can prescribe or manage medication.

Right to choose and prescribing

The list of quality assured Right to Choose providers on the NHS Norfolk and Waveney Provider Framework above shows which local providers have arrangements in place for NHS prescribing.

If you use a provider outside of this list and medication is recommended, you may need a referral to your local NHS Neurodevelopmental Service, which would involve another waiting period.

Private assessment and prescribing

If you decide to use a private provider the parent/ carer should be aware that they are expected to pay the full costs of this. Any medicine prescribed or treatment provided during, or following a private consultation, will be at the families own expense. For ADHD this could include paying privately for the assessment, medication, medication reviews and annual reviews with the private provider.

To access ongoing medication through the NHS your child would need a referral from your GP to the local NHS Neurodevelopmental Service. NHS appointments are given based on who has waited the longest and who has the most urgent needs. This means that even after a private assessment, you may have the same waiting time as anyone else.

Further support and information

NHS Norfolk and Waveney, with colleagues from the wider Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care System, have developed further advice and signposting.

The following quick guides are created for any family who feels their child may be showing signs of neurodevelopmental differences. They can signpost you to resources and services to support you on your journey.

Although an assessment for neurodevelopmental differences such as autism or ADHD is helpful for some families, confirmation of neurodiversity is not required to access additional support.

Further information and direct links can be found here in the [Quick Guide to Neurodevelopmental Support \(justonenorfolk.nhs.uk\)](#).

NHS Norfolk and Waveney have also published a Supporting your Neurodiverse Child information pack to support families in their journey, which details links to local organisations. This pack is available [here](#).