

Autism & ADHD Services in Northamptonshire – Quick Guide

This summary guide helps you to understand support options, assessment routes, and prescribing rules for autism and ADHD. For more information, see our FAQ.

Do I Need a Diagnosis?

- **Support is based on needs**, not diagnosis.
- You **don't need a diagnosis** for help at school, social care, or benefits.
- **You do need a diagnosis** to be prescribed ADHD medication.

Why Are Waiting Times So Long?

- Demand for assessments has surged.
- NHS services are expanding, but waits can be between **1–13 years** nationally.
- 500 Extra assessments are being added in Northamptonshire for 2025/26.

Support Without Diagnosis

- Local services include: Enfold, CHAT Health, Shout, TRACK, SENDIASS, Recovery College, and many peer support groups. More information is in the larger FAQ.

Assessment Routes

1. **NHS Referral:** Via GP; includes holistic assessment and prescribing.
2. **Right to Choose (RtC):** Choose an NHS-approved provider; discuss with your GP the referral pathway.
 - Not all RtC providers offer prescribing, GPs may not prescribe unless a formal Shared Care Agreement is in place.
 - Right to choose is for one provider only per patient unless prescribing is referred to local services.
3. **Private Assessment:** Self-funded (£500–£3,500+).
 - May not be accepted by NHS.
 - Prescribing is usually private unless reassessed by NHS.

ADHD Medication

- NHS local services starts treatment, then GPs may continue under Shared Care.
- GPs **won't prescribe** based on private diagnosis unless safety protocols are met.
- RtC providers may prescribe if they hold NHS contracts.

Switching Between Services

- You can move from private to NHS care, but may need reassessment.
- NHS won't reimburse private costs.
- You can't be on both NHS and RtC waiting lists at once.

Consider what you want from a diagnosis—it's not always necessary unless medication is needed.