

Right to Choose – Information for Patients and Families

What is Right to Choose?

Right to Choose is an NHS option that allows you to choose which NHS-approved provider you are referred to for certain consultant-led services, such as ADHD or autism assessments.

This option is only available for services that are commissioned by the NHS and that accept Right to Choose referrals. Not all services or providers offer this pathway.

Choosing a Provider

If you decide to use Right to Choose, the provider you are referred to must be chosen by you.

Your GP practice is not able to research, compare, or recommend providers. This helps ensure the process remains fair and patient-led.

- You must provide the exact name of the provider
- You must tell us which service you are requesting
- We cannot proceed with a referral without this information

Adults (18 years and over)

If you are an adult requesting a Right to Choose referral, please bring full details of your chosen provider to your GP appointment.

- Dorset ICB has asked that and Right To Choose referrals that are done for pathways outside of Dorset for ADHD or Autism referrals means that any local referrals should be cancelled.

[ADHD AND AUTISM SERVICES – REFERRAL PATHWAYS AND WAITING LIST MANAGEMENT](#)

Patients should not be on a local waiting list and another waiting list in the UK at the same time.

Your GP will discuss whether a referral is clinically appropriate, but the referral cannot proceed unless a specific provider is named.

Children and Young People

For children and young people, a parent or carer must attend the GP appointment. Please bring the following with you to the appointment.

- SENCO letters (if available)
- Recent school reports or assessments
- Any relevant professional reports

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Local Support and School Pathways

Right to Choose referrals do not replace local services. Any existing school, health, or community support should continue while waiting for assessment.

Medication and Prescribing

Some Right to Choose providers only offer assessments and diagnoses and do not provide ongoing treatment.

GPs can only prescribe medication if a shared care agreement is in place and prescribing is considered safe and appropriate.

- Prescribing medication is not guaranteed
- Shared care requests are reviewed on an individual basis
- Your GP may decline shared care if it is not appropriate

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Do I have a Right to Choose for all NHS services?

No. Right to Choose only applies to certain consultant-led NHS services. It does not apply to emergency care, GP services, or all community services.

Does using Right to Choose mean I will be seen faster?

Not necessarily. Waiting times vary between providers and can change. Choosing a different provider does not guarantee a shorter waiting time.

Can the referral be done without a GP appointment?

In most cases, a GP appointment is required to confirm that a referral is appropriate and that all required information is available.

Can my GP tell me which provider to choose?

No. The decision must be made by you. The GP practice cannot recommend providers.

Who can I contact if I need help?

If you have general questions about the process, please contact the GP practice. More detailed questions can be discussed during your GP appointment.