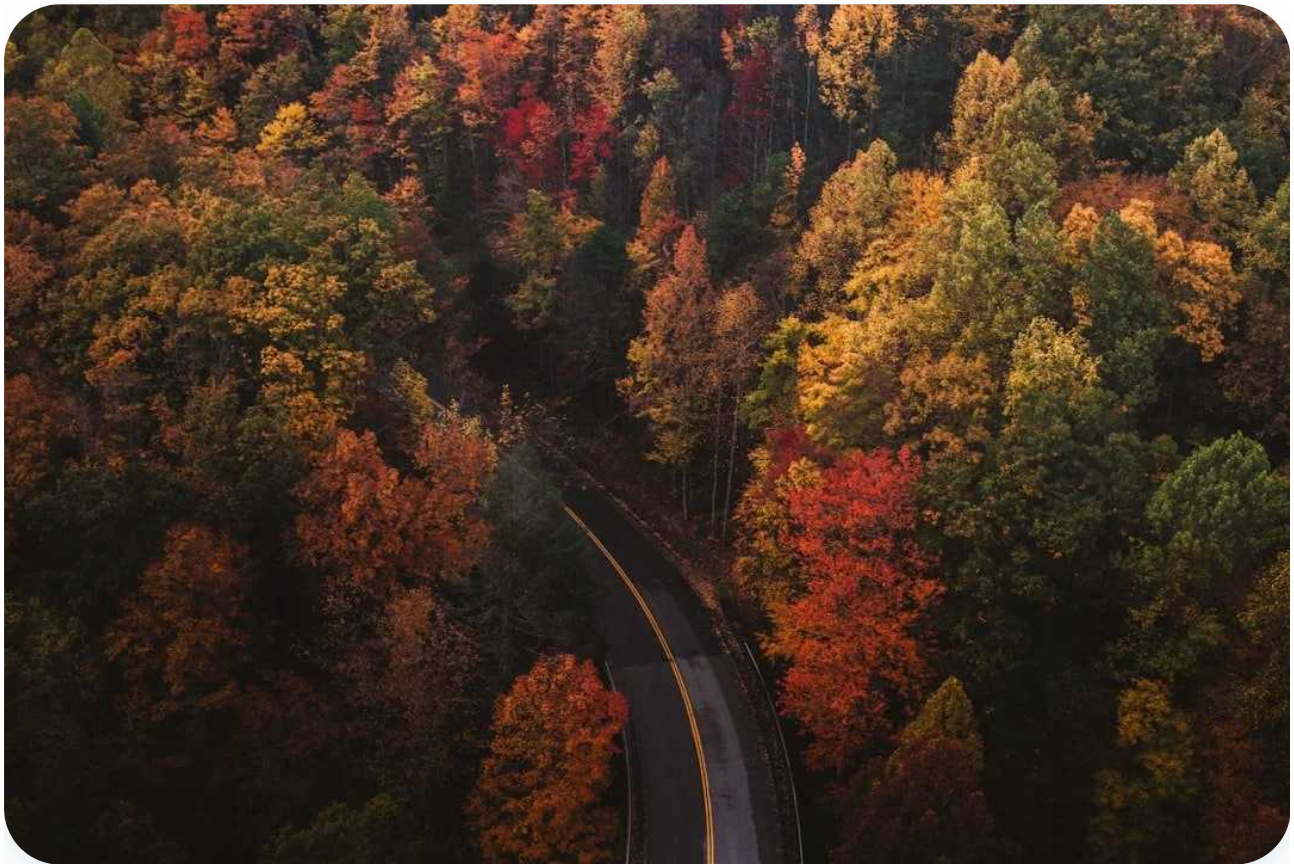


THE CHILD ADHD ASSESSMENT GUIDE

Chapter 6

Your options: NHS, Right to Choose, private

3 min read · Last reviewed by Tina Fox, 30 May 2026



Every route to a diagnosis is a little different.

When parents weigh up an NHS versus private ADHD assessment for their child, they often do not realise there is a third route in between. There are really three ways a child can be assessed in England: the standard NHS pathway, NHS-funded Right to Choose, and going private. This chapter compares them honestly, so you can pick the one that fits your family.

Three routes, side by side

Each route reaches the same destination, a thorough assessment against the same national standard. They differ in who pays, how long it tends to take, and how much choice you have over where your child is seen.

	NHS	Right to Choose	Private
How it works	GP refers your child to your local NHS service.	GP refers your child to an NHS-funded provider you choose.	You book directly with a private clinic.
Cost to you	Free at the point of use.	Free at the point of use, funded by the NHS.	Paid privately, at a fixed published fee.
Typical wait	Varies widely by area, often long.	Varies, and can be shorter than the local NHS wait.	Typically 6 to 8 weeks.
Choice of provider	Usually your local service only.	You choose from approved NHS-funded providers.	Any clinic you wish to approach.

The three routes to a child ADHD assessment, compared honestly.

A word on waiting times

We will not quote you an NHS waiting time, because there is no honest single figure to give. Waits for children's assessments vary enormously from one area to the next, and they change quickly. A number we printed today could mislead you next month.

Instead, the most reliable place to check your own area is [ADHD UK's Right to Choose resource](#), which has a postcode lookup and up-to-date, area-specific information.

Months to years

the range NHS ADHD waits can span, depending entirely on where you live

Check your own area with ADHD UK Right to Choose

Right to Choose, explained

Right to Choose is part of the NHS, not separate from it. In England, when your GP refers your child, you have a legal right to choose the provider, including some independent clinics that hold an NHS contract. The assessment is still funded by the NHS, so there is no cost to you.

It is worth a conversation with your GP, who can refer your child and talk through which providers are available to you.

If shared care matters to you

If you might later want your GP to take over prescribing after a private diagnosis, this is known as shared care. It is always at your GP's sole discretion, and not every practice takes it on. If it matters to you, it is worth speaking to your GP before you book.



NeuroFX is based in Bedford.

Where a private assessment fits

Going private suits families who would rather not wait, or who want to choose exactly who assesses their child. Because there is no NHS-style waiting list, the timescale is far shorter, and the appointment itself is unhurried, set aside for 2 to 3 hours rather than squeezed into a brief slot.

A private route does not replace NHS care; it sits alongside it. If you would like to see how the appointment runs, [what actually happens in an assessment](#) takes you through it.

Key takeaways

- There are three routes: the standard NHS pathway, NHS-funded Right to Choose, and going private.
- All three reach a thorough assessment against the same national standard; they differ on cost, wait and choice.
- NHS waits vary too much to quote; check your own area with ADHD UK's Right to Choose postcode tool.
- Shared care, where your GP takes over prescribing later, is always at your GP's sole discretion.

Common questions

What is the difference between NHS and Right to Choose?

Right to Choose is still NHS-funded and free to you, but it lets you choose an approved provider rather than only your local service. Your GP makes the referral in both cases.

How long is the NHS wait for a child ADHD assessment?

There is no single national figure, because waits vary widely by area and change quickly. The most reliable check is ADHD UK's Right to Choose resource, which has a postcode lookup for your area.

Does going private mean my child cannot use the NHS?

No. A private assessment sits alongside NHS care, not instead of it. Your child keeps all their usual NHS rights.

Can my GP prescribe ADHD medication after a private diagnosis?

Sometimes, through a shared care arrangement, but this is always at your GP's sole discretion and not every practice offers it. If it matters to you, speak to your GP before booking.

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This guide is general information, not a substitute for individual clinical advice, and it cannot diagnose ADHD or any other condition. If you are concerned about yourself or your child, please speak to your GP or arrange a professional assessment. NeuroFX is a CQC-registered clinic and our guidance follows NICE guideline NG87.