

ADHD and Autism Assessment and Treatment Information for patients at Woodbridge Hill Surgery

We understand that many patients are seeking assessment for Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC).

This page explains:

- How assessment works
- Current NHS waiting times
- Your referral options
- How ADHD medication prescribing works
- How our Shared Care Policy applies

ADHD Assessment

Can GPs diagnose ADHD?

No.

ADHD diagnosis must be made by a specialist clinician, usually:

- A Consultant Psychiatrist
- A Specialist ADHD service
- A Neurodevelopmental team

GPs can discuss symptoms, provide screening questionnaires where appropriate, and refer to specialist services — but we cannot formally diagnose ADHD or initiate specialist medication.

NHS ADHD Assessment (Local Services)

Local NHS ADHD services are currently experiencing very high demand.

Unfortunately:

- Adult NHS ADHD waiting times may be several years
- There may also be delays for medication initiation appointments

We understand this can be frustrating, but these waiting times are outside the control of GP practices. If you wish to pursue assessment through the local NHS pathway, please contact the practice to discuss referral.

NHS Right to Choose (RTC)

Under NHS “Right to Choose”, eligible patients may choose an NHS-contracted provider outside their local area.

Right to Choose providers:

- Are NHS-funded
- Often provide remote assessments
- May have shorter waiting times than local services

If you would like to explore this option, please contact the practice and we can guide you through the referral process.

Please note that waiting times vary between providers and may change.

Private ADHD Assessment

Some patients choose to access ADHD assessment privately.

If you are considering private assessment, it is important to check:

- The qualifications and registration of the clinician
- Whether they are a Consultant Psychiatrist or appropriately qualified specialist
- Whether they provide ongoing follow-up
- Whether they will continue prescribing if shared care is not accepted
- Whether they provide a formal Shared Care Agreement

Not all private providers offer long-term prescribing or monitoring. This is important because GP prescribing is not automatic (see below).

ADHD Medication

ADHD medications:

- Must be initiated by a specialist
- Require dose adjustment (titration)
- Require monitoring (blood pressure, pulse, weight, and sometimes ECG)
- Require ongoing specialist review
- May be controlled drugs and require careful prescribing governance

GPs cannot start ADHD medication.

Shared Care and ADHD Medication

If a specialist recommends ADHD medication, they may request that the GP practice takes over ongoing prescribing once treatment is stable. This is called a **Shared Care Agreement (SCA)**.

Woodbridge Hill Surgery follows a formal Shared Care Policy for all specialist-initiated medications.

You can read our full Shared Care Policy here:

[Insert link]

When can the GP prescribe ADHD medication?

We will only consider shared care if:

- The specialist has confirmed the diagnosis
- The medication has been started and stabilised by the specialist
- A written Shared Care Agreement is provided
- The specialist remains responsible for ongoing follow-up
- There is a named responsible clinician
- Clear monitoring guidance is provided
- Safe monitoring arrangements are in place

Shared care is voluntary and not automatically accepted.

Each request is reviewed individually to ensure it is safe and sustainable.

If shared care is not accepted

If shared care is not accepted, the specialist service remains responsible for:

- Prescribing the medication
- Arranging monitoring
- Providing follow-up
- Adjusting doses

This applies whether assessment was through local NHS services, NHS Right to Choose or Private providers. **If your provider does not offer ongoing prescribing or monitoring, you may wish to discuss this with them before starting treatment.**

Autism (ASC) Assessment

Can GPs diagnose Autism?

No.

Autism diagnosis must be made by a specialist neurodevelopmental team.

GPs can discuss symptoms and refer to appropriate services.

NHS Autism Assessment

Local NHS autism services are also experiencing high demand, and waiting times may be long.

If you wish to pursue assessment, please contact the practice to discuss referral options.

Right to Choose for Autism

Right to Choose may also apply to autism assessments where NHS-contracted providers are available.

If you would like to explore this option, please contact the practice for further information.

Is there medication for autism?

There is no routine medication for autism itself.

Autism is typically managed through:

- Understanding and support strategies
- Educational or workplace adjustments
- Psychological therapies where appropriate
- Support services

In some cases, medication may be used to treat associated conditions (such as anxiety or depression), but this is separate from autism diagnosis itself.

Autism assessment does not usually involve shared care prescribing arrangements.

Monitoring and Patient Responsibilities (ADHD Medication)

If shared care for ADHD medication is agreed:

Patients are expected to:

- Attend specialist follow-up appointments
- Attend GP monitoring appointments
- Complete required blood pressure, pulse, weight or ECG checks
- Inform the practice of side effects

If monitoring is not completed, medication may need to be paused for safety reasons.

Why does the practice take this approach?

Shared care prescribing involves significant clinical responsibility and monitoring.

These arrangements are outside core GP contractual services and require careful governance to ensure:

- Patient safety
- Consistency
- Fairness
- Sustainable service delivery for our entire practice population

We understand that long waiting times can be distressing. Our policy is designed to ensure that specialist medication is prescribed safely and with appropriate oversight.

What the practice can help with

We can:

- Discuss symptoms and concerns
- Provide screening questionnaires where appropriate

- Refer to NHS or Right to Choose services
 - Provide physical health monitoring where appropriate
 - Signpost to local and national support
-

Urgent Mental Health Concerns

If you are experiencing:

- Severe deterioration in mental health
- Suicidal thoughts
- Crisis symptoms

Please contact:

- NHS 111 (mental health option)
- Local 24/7 Crisis Line: 0800 915 4644
- Or 999 in an emergency

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