



Changes to the referral process for our Children and Young People's Autism and ADHD Services

From 1 November 2024 we will be using an updated referral process for our Children and Young People's Autism and ADHD services.

Referrals for children and young people's ADHD and autism assessments are very high across the country, leading to long waiting times. We are making changes to help make sure that children and young people are given support based on their own individual needs as early as possible, regardless of a formal diagnosis.

A child or young person's needs are the same before an assessment as they are after a diagnosis. What matters most is providing the right support, at the right time, in the right place.

What's changing?

We are making changes to who refers, when they refer, and how they refer.

If you think your child may have autism or ADHD, receiving support as early as possible is important. Start by talking to your child's school, nursery or education setting about your concerns. They will be able to create a support plan tailored to your child's needs, without an assessment or diagnosis.

If your child is not in an early years or educational setting, speak to a professional who knows your child well such as a health visitor, speech and language therapist, paediatrician, or CAMHS clinician.

If, after six months, you and the professional involved feel that the support plan that has been put in place is not supporting your child's needs, you can make a referral to the service. Referrals will be made jointly by families and schools. Working with someone that knows your child well means that everyone can understand and support their needs.

We will ask for an additional information document to be completed together and uploaded with the online referral form. This means that we will have all the information we need from the right people to decide how we can best help.

When it is clear that a specialist autism or ADHD assessment is needed, then our hope is that, over time, the wait for this will become shorter.

Why are we making these changes?

We know that some children and young people come for an assessment without having been given a support plan. We also know that some families believe that an assessment is the only way to get help.

Adding children and young people to a long waiting list does not meet their needs. They should not have to wait for or rely on an assessment or diagnosis to get support.

Without these changes, we risk delays to accessing early help. Waits for assessment will become longer.

When are things changing?

The updated process will be in place on 1 November 2024. All the information and documents you need will be on the [referral page of our website](#).

The changes only apply to referrals received after this date.

What if my child was referred before 1 November 2024?

There will be no changes if:

- your child was referred on or before 31 October 2024 or
- your child takes ADHD medication and attends review appointments with our ADHD Team.

What support is available?

There is lots of support available for children and young people which can be put in place at an early years setting or school, and at home, without a diagnosis.

Support based on the child or young person's needs is always available through their school, nursery, the Berkshire Healthcare website, local autism and ADHD services, and other services such as health visiting, school nursing, speech and language therapy, occupational therapy or CAMHS.

Find all the information in one place on what support is available:

[ADHD Getting help now information](#)

[Autism Getting help now information](#)

Autism and ADHD support services (no diagnosis needed):

- Visit [GEMS](#) if you live or have a GP in Berkshire East (Bracknell, Windsor or Slough)
- Visit the [Autism Berkshire](#) website for details of the Berkshire West Autism and ADHD Support Service if you live in or have a GP in Reading, Wokingham or West Berkshire

View the Local Offer for your area:

- [Bracknell](#)
- [Reading](#)
- [Slough](#)
- [West Berkshire](#)
- [Windsor & Maidenhead](#)
- [Wokingham](#)

Berkshire Healthcare website information and support pages:

- [ADHD and Autism \(Neurodiversity\)](#)
- [Mental and Emotional Health](#)
- [Health and Development](#)
- [Sensory differences](#)
- [Communication](#)