



N - CAMHS

Neurodiverse Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service
NHS Ayrshire & Arran



Frequently Asked Questions

Information for Parents and Carers



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What is the current waiting time for an assessment and why can't we be given an exact time frame?

The N-CAMHS waiting list is approximately three years. We know that this is unacceptable, and we are working hard to improve this. Every young person requires an assessment that meets their individual needs. This makes it difficult for us to provide an exact time frame as the assessment(s) offered to each individual varies. Sometimes we must prioritise urgent cases which impacts on the number of appointments we can offer. This can lead to further delays for young people who are currently on our waiting list.

What is the prioritisation criteria?

N-CAMHS have recently reviewed and updated our prioritisation criteria. There is very rarely a need for an urgent decision about whether a young person has a neurodevelopmental disorder. We know that most parents and carers are anxious to have assessments quickly and that schools would like to know the assessment outcome to offer extra services and supports. However, all neurodevelopmental strategies should be available without a diagnosis and use of those strategies should be encouraged. Queries about such issues should be directed to education services.

If there is a request to reconsider the level of priority it must be clearly evident that a delay in assessment

would put the young person at significant risk of harm or distress. One or more of the following criteria must be indicated for prioritisation:

- Assessment requested by Social Work as part of an active Child Protection proceeding
- Care experienced young people, where there is recurrent placement breakdown and/or the need for assessment to support long-term placement provision
- Active involvement with Youth Offending Services
- Young people **currently on the waiting list** approaching a transition from primary to secondary school
- Young people aged 17 to 18 years old that will be transitioning to adult services, and a delay in assessment will impact future life experiences

Risks and problems which we cannot prioritise because interventions by other services do not require a neurodevelopmental diagnosis:

- Exclusions from school or breakdown of school placement
- Parental anxiety or mental ill-health
- Having had a previous assessment with a different conclusion
- Parental complaints about the length of the wait

What is currently being done to manage the waiting times?

The N-CAMHS service have introduced different pathways to support young peoples' journey through our service. A young person's information will be reviewed by the N-CAMHS service manager and team co-ordinator to offer an assessment that suits their needs. Your child/young person will be offered an assessment with one of the following:

External private agency

Nursing and Allied Health Professionals (AHPs)

Clinical Nurse Specialists and/or Pharmacist

Psychologist and/or Nursing and AHP

Psychiatrist

AHPs refers to any of the following professionals - Dietetics, Occupational Therapy, Speech and Language Therapy.

We have been offered an appointment with an external private agency, why is this and will there be a difference in the support we receive?

NHS Ayrshire & Arran use reputable, external private agencies to help us work through our waiting lists. A young person will be offered an assessment with an external private agency if they meet the agreed criteria. Young people are reviewed on an individual basis and the assessment provided by the external private agency will be the same as that offered by N-CAMHS. The external private agencies will provide an assessment and a written report, which will be returned to us.

My child / young person is on the waiting list and their mental health is deteriorating, what should I do?

If a young person is at immediate risk of significant harm, you should dial 999. If you have any concerns regarding your child/young person's mental health, please contact the Community Child and Adolescent Mental Health Team for advice and support on 01294 323425.

I'm thinking about taking my child for a private assessment, what should I do?

You should discuss this with N-CAMHS in the first instance so that we can provide you with appropriate advice and information. Please call 01294 322046.

My child has been assessed by a private provider, that we paid for, and medication has been recommended. What happens next?

You will need to provide us with a copy of the report to allow us to confirm that the assessment outcomes and recommendation for medication meet relevant policies within NHS Ayrshire & Arran. If appropriate, we will allocate your child/young person an appointment as timeously as possible.

What supports are available whilst we wait for the assessment?

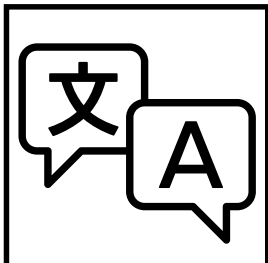
You can access support through a range of organisations. More information can be found on the NHS Ayrshire & Arran Neurodiversity App (available on Apple and Android) Neurodevelopmental Empowerment and Strategy Team (NEST) www.nest.scot

I'd like to share feedback about the service we have received, how can I do this?

We hope that you have found this FAQ document useful. Please let us know your thoughts and tell us how we might make it better using the QR code below.



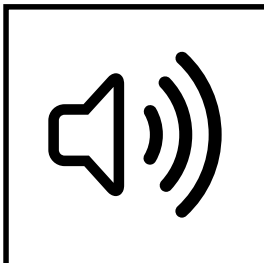
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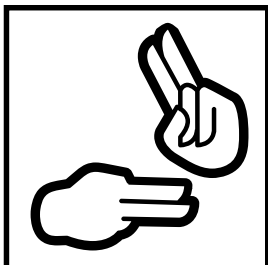
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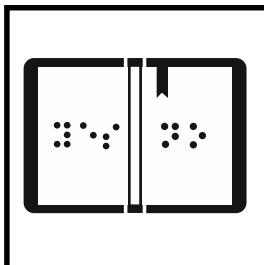
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